



LAND USE CHAPTER of the COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The purposes of the land use chapter are to describe the existing land use patterns in Lexington, to recommend land use policies for future development which are compatible with the character of the community, and to propose mechanisms for the implementation of these policies.

The chapter first describes the current land use patterns and policies, including present land use, zoning, and vacant land in Lexington, the current master plans for future development at Washington and Lee University (W&L) and Virginia Military Institute (VMI), and the land use pattern in Rockbridge County within the immediate area of the City. It then presents issues, goals and recommendations for future land use decisions to preserve and enhance the character and economic vitality of Lexington, including changes to the present zoning map and ordinance, identification of vacant and underutilized land and proposals to encourage and facilitate its beneficial development, and better coordination with W&L, VMI and Rockbridge County. The future land use map which serves as the basis for the zoning map is then presented and the implementation tools available to the City described.

The land use chapter serves as a guide to decisions by the Planning Commission and City Council concerning private development proposals and the location of public facilities. It also provides the foundation for zoning and subdivision regulations which allow the City to implement its land use plan.

CURRENT LAND USE

The land use categories utilized for the evaluation of existing land use and a brief description of the uses in each category are presented below:

Single-family homes and duplexes - one and two family dwellings

Multiple-family dwellings - buildings with 3 or more dwellings

Manufactured home park - development, including streets, utilities and parking pads, for use by manufactured homes

Commercial -wholesale and retail businesses, hotels and motels

Office - finance, insurance, real estate, medical and health services, other professional and service related activities

Mixed use - buildings utilized for more than one of the following three purposes: commercial, office and residential

Industry - fabricating, assembly and repair activities

Transportation, utilities, communications - transportation and related transfer and maintenance facilities; electric, gas, water and waste disposal services including processing, storage and related facilities; public works facilities and maintenance yards

Institutional - hospitals, nursing homes, rescue squad facilities, churches, colleges and universities

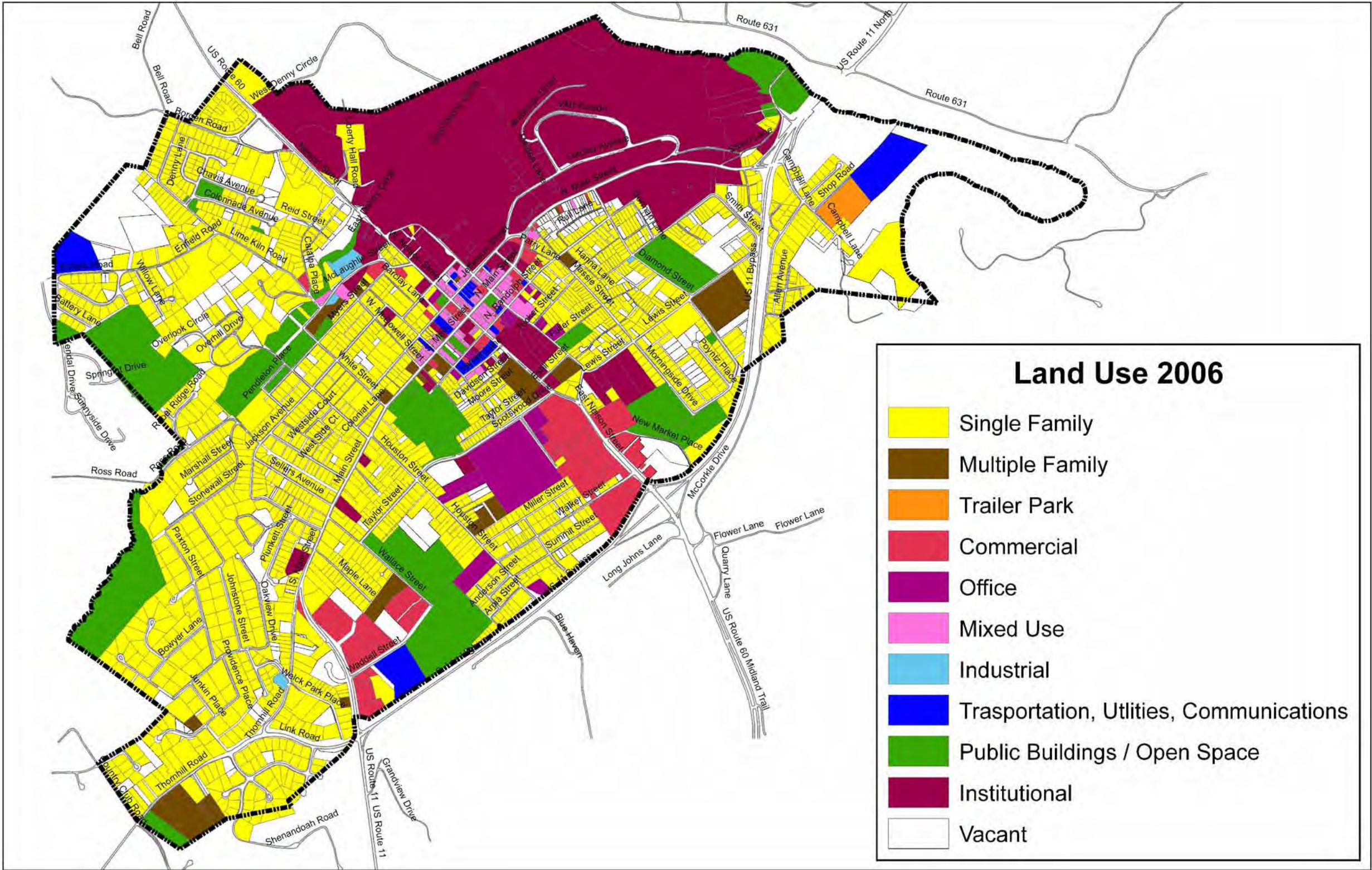
Public buildings and open space - Federal, state and local governmental offices, post offices, libraries, public schools, police and fire facilities, parks, recreation areas, golf courses, cemeteries

Rights-of-way - public rights of way in the City used for streets and sidewalks

Vacant - undeveloped land

Numerous developed residential properties throughout the City are composed of more than one parcel of land. Often the house is built on one recorded lot and the second lot is integrated into the yard. If these vacant lots may be sold and built upon, they have been classified as vacant. If, however, the vacant lot is substandard in size or has no street frontage, then it was not considered vacant and has been classified as single-family residential. Land use information for each of these categories is displayed graphically in Figure 7.1, The Existing Land Use map and in Table 7.1, Land Use by Category, which reports the acreage and the number of parcels in each land use category.

FIGURE 7.1
EXISTING LAND USE



**TABLE 7.1
LAND USE BY CATEGORY
2005**

Land Use Classification	Acreage	Per Cent of Total*	Number of Parcels
Single Family Homes and Duplexes	612.20	38.57	1834
Multiple Family Housing	33.62	2.12	35
Manufactured Home Park	5.59	0.35	1
Commercial	56.32	3.55	79
Office	30.19	1.90	26
Mixed Use	12.45	0.78	114
Industry	3.17	0.20	5
Transportation Utilities Communications	24.64	1.55	26
Public Buildings and Open Space	150.62	9.49	42
Right of Way	167.30	10.54	0
Institutional	286.62	18.06	86
Vacant	204.47	12.88	352
Total	1,587.19	99.99	2,600

Source: City of Lexington Department of Planning and Development

* Total does not equal 100% due to rounding

Existing land use is also shown graphically on the map presented in Figure 7.1.

PRESENT ZONING

There are 11 basic Zoning Districts established in the City. A list of each of these districts and the uses authorized in each are:

Suburban Residential District (R-1A) - Low density residential uses; single family homes and primary residences with an accessory apartment, as well as compatible nonresidential uses such as schools, churches, parks and playgrounds, and libraries; care homes, bed and breakfast inns, and family home day care may be authorized with a conditional use permit

General Residential District (R-1) - Moderate density residential uses; single family and two family dwellings are authorized, as well as compatible nonresidential uses such as schools, churches, parks and playgrounds; care homes, family home day care, and bed and breakfast inns on Main, Nelson and Washington Streets may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Multiple-Family Residential District (R-M) - Medium density residential uses; single family homes, two family homes, townhouses and apartments and parks and playgrounds are authorized; care homes, tourist homes, boarding or lodging houses, bed and breakfast inns and fraternities and sororities may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Multiple-Family High-Rise District (R-H) - High density apartments and related nonresidential uses; single family homes, two family homes, high-rise apartments and limited medical and commercial establishments within high-rise apartments operated primarily for the use of the residents are authorized; care homes, tourist homes, boarding or lodging houses, bed and breakfast inns and fraternities and sororities may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Multiple-Family Mobile Home District (R-MH) - Medium density residential uses and mobile home parks and subdivisions; single family homes, two family homes, townhouses and apartments, mobile home parks and subdivisions, convenience establishments as part of a mobile home park or subdivision, churches, schools and parks and playgrounds are authorized

Professional Services-Residential District (PS-R) - Low density residential uses and professional services which are compatible with residential uses; single family and two family dwellings, schools, churches, parks and playgrounds, hospitals, nursing homes and clinics are authorized, as well as compatible professional office uses such as lawyers, doctors, dentists, engineers, accountants, etc.; pharmacies may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Commercial District (Central Business) (C-1) - Historic downtown business area; dwelling units above the first floor, apartments and townhouses, stores and shops, restaurants and bakeries, hotels and motels, personal service uses, banks and offices are authorized; drive-in facilities, theaters, game rooms, and take-out restaurants may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Commercial District (Central Business) (C-1A) - Historic area on the periphery of the downtown in which a wider range of commercial activity is authorized including drive-in facilities and other automobile oriented businesses; all of the uses permitted in the C-1 District are authorized; in addition service stations and take out restaurants are permitted. Conditional uses are the same as for the C-1 District

Commercial District (Shopping Centers) (C-2) - Commercial areas and shopping centers located away from the center of the city; shopping centers, wholesale and retail sales, restaurants, offices, personal service establishments, hotels and motels with up to 25 rooms, automobile sales, service and repair and light manufacturing activities are authorized; game rooms and theaters, building supplies, car washes, and hotels and motels with 25 rooms or more may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Commercial District (General Commerce) (C-3) - All of the activities authorized in the C-2 District are authorized, in addition storage warehouses, heavier manufacturing activities, and building materials sales and yards, are permitted; veterinary hospitals and kennels, welding and machine shops and aboveground petroleum bulk storage may be authorized with a conditional use permit

Residential-Light Commercial District (R-LC) - Light and medium density housing and light commercial operations; single family homes, two family homes, townhouses and apartments, parks and playgrounds, building supply outlets, repair and assembly shops, personal service uses and theaters are authorized; tourist homes, boarding or lodging houses, and fraternities and sororities may be authorized with a conditional use permit

In addition, there are two "Overlay Districts" in the City. These are districts which are superimposed on one or more of the existing districts described above. The provisions of these districts supplement the zoning provisions of the underlying district. These districts are:

Institutional District (I-1) - a district established for Washington and Lee University and Stonewall Jackson Hospital which authorizes them to develop their campuses in accordance with a master plan submitted to and approved by the City

General Floodplain District (FP) - restricting or prohibiting certain activities and development from locating within areas subject to flooding and requiring all of those uses which are permitted in the district to be protected against flooding and flood damage

Conditional use permits are required for uses which, because of their character, may or may not be appropriate for a particular location. They must be authorized by City Council after receiving a recommendation from the Planning Commission and are evaluated in terms of their impact on the surrounding neighborhood. City Council may deny a request for a Conditional Use Permit if it does not conform to standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance concerning the effects of the proposed use on the community and the surrounding neighborhood. They also have the power to attach specific conditions to the approval to reduce the effects of the use on adjacent properties.

The current Zoning Map of the City of Lexington is presented in Figure 7.2.

Information concerning the amount of land and the number of parcels contained in each of the zoning districts is presented in Table 7.2. This table reports the zoning for those portions of the City in the Institutional District (the main W&L Campus, the fraternity clusters at Red Square and Davidson Park) as Institutional rather than the underlying zoning districts (R-1, R-M and C-1A) since a Master Plan has been approved for these areas and development is being undertaken in conformance with that plan. The VMI campus is included in the Institutional District as well, although the land is technically zoned R-1. VMI, as a State institution, is exempt from the City's zoning regulations. Rather than include this property in the R-1 District and greatly increase the land area included in this district, it is included in that District within which it would most logically fall.

The parcels reported are those shown on the City's tax maps. In some cases, a tract of land in single ownership may be composed of several tax map parcels.

**FIGURE 7.2
PRESENT ZONING**

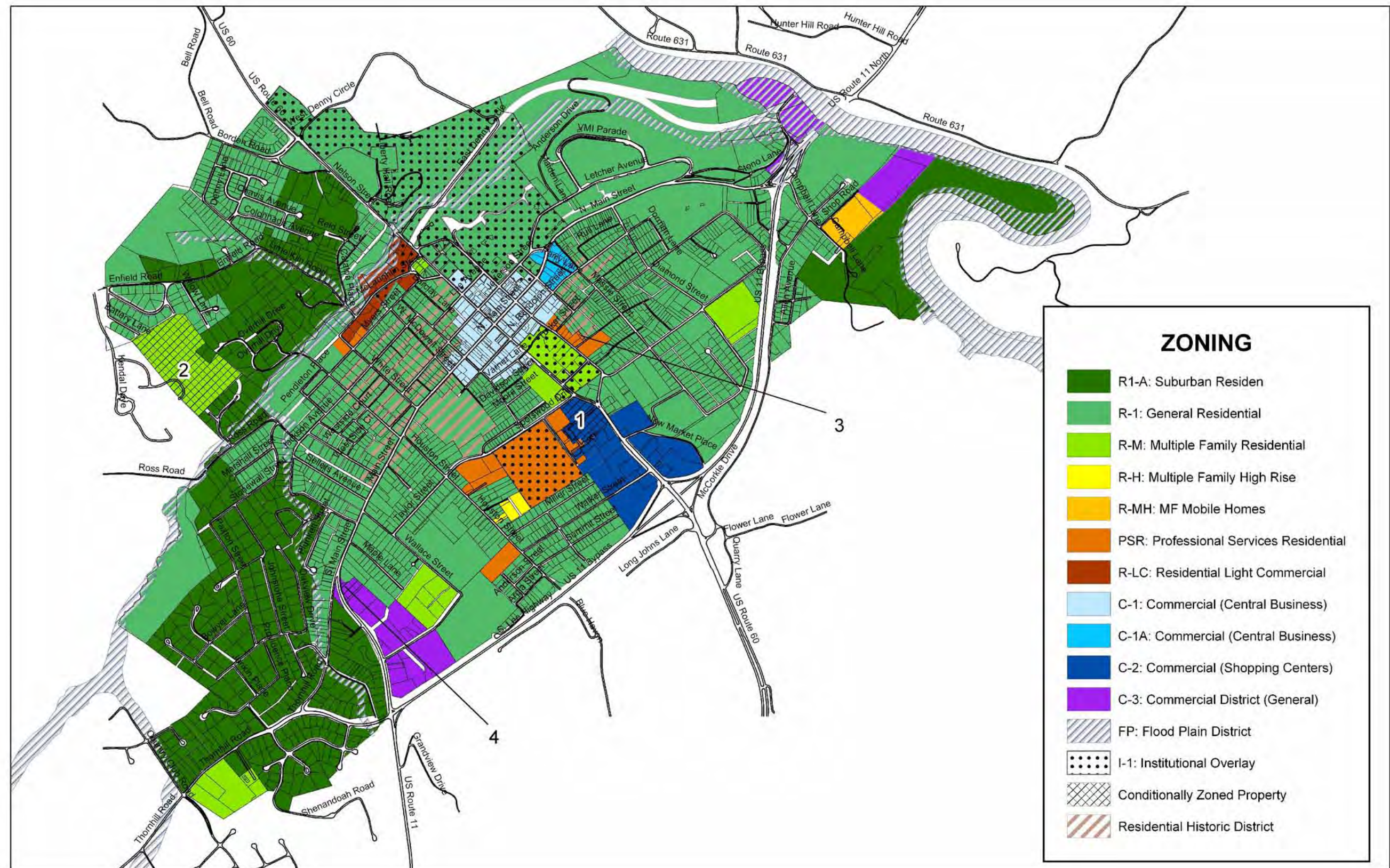


TABLE 7.2
LAND AREA BY ZONING CLASSIFICATION
2005

Zoning Classification	Acreage	Per Cent of Total*	Number of Parcels
General Residential (R-1)	849.04	59.78	1763
Suburban Residential (R-1A)	330.16	23.25	451
Multiple-Family Residential (R-M)	69.17	4.87	37
Multiple-Family High-Rise (R-H)	2.42	0.17	4
Multiple-Family Mobile Home (R-MH)	5.59	0.39	1
Professional Services-Residential (PSR)	34.24	2.41	24
Commercial District-Central Business (C-1)	30.70	2.16	212
Commercial District-Central Business (C-1A)	4.45	0.31	28
Commercial District-Shopping Centers (C-2)	39.41	2.77	32
Commercial District-General Commercial (C-3)	43.67	3.07	29
Residential - Light Commercial (R-LC)	11.34	0.80	19
Institutional Overlay**	151.47		53
Residential Historic Overlay**	97.70		212
Conditionally Zoned**	32.39		4
Total	1420.19	99.98	2600

Source: City of Lexington Department of Planning and Development

*Less than the total land area of the City because rights of way are excluded.

**Overlay Districts and Conditionally Zoned properties are not included in total.

VACANT LAND

Remaining vacant land in the City is presented in Figure 7.3.

The amount of vacant land and the number of vacant parcels in each of the City's Zoning Districts are presented in Table 7.3.

Vacant land in the Institutional District (the W&L campus and nearby fraternity clusters) is not included. This land is in a limited number of tracts and if developed will be developed for institutional purposes. Such development will essentially be "in-fill" where additional buildings will be sited adjacent to or among existing buildings.

FIGURE 7.3 VACANT LAND

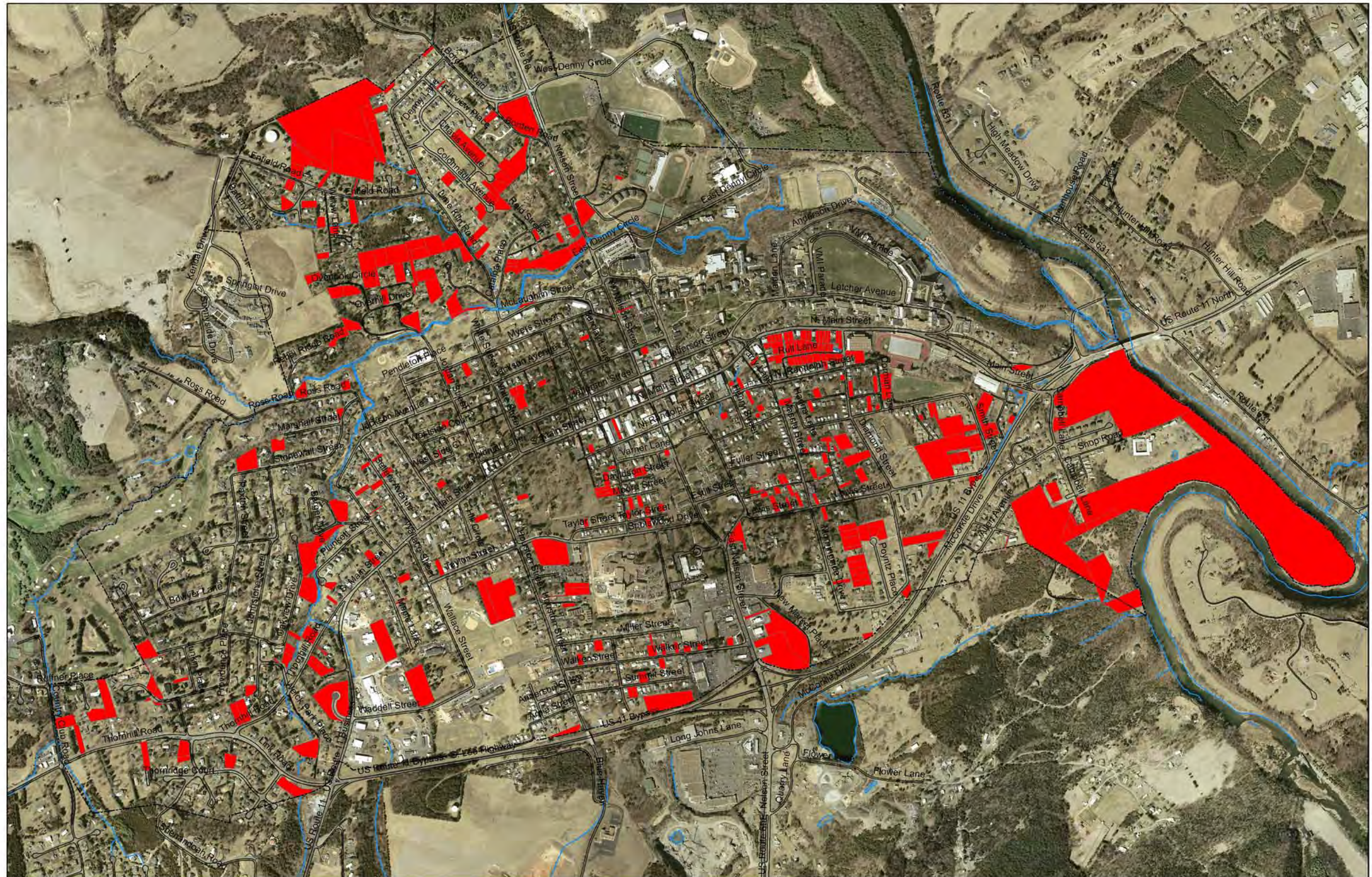


TABLE 7.3
VACANT LAND BY ZONING CLASSIFICATION
2005

Zoning Classification	Acreage	Per Cent of Total	Number of Parcels
General Residential (R-1)	119.91	58.64	263
Suburban Residential (R-2)	68.53	33.51	58
Multiple Family Residential (R-M)	3.70	1.81	5
Professional Services Residential (PSR)	2.50	1.22	2
Commercial - Central Business (C-1)	0.92	0.45	13
Commercial - Central Business (C-1A)	0.29	0.14	3
Commercial - Shopping Centers (C-2)	8.52	4.17	7
Residential - Light Commercial (R-LC)	0.10	0.05	1
Total	204.47	99.99	352

Source: City of Lexington Department of Planning and Development

* Total does not equal 100% due to rounding

INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLANS

The City recognizes and acknowledges the many positive economic, cultural, and aesthetic benefits to the City as a result of the presence of Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute within our borders.

This section describes the current master plans for future development of Washington and Lee University (W&L) and the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), the two institutions of higher learning located within the City. Comments about and recommendations concerning these master plans are made later in this chapter.

Virginia Military Institute's Current Master Plan

The attached map, Figure 7.4, reflects VMI's current Master Plan. This plan differs fundamentally from their previous Master Plan which was described in the City's 1995 Comprehensive Plan. The emphasis in that plan was on the renovation of existing buildings. New buildings, where proposed, were within the confines of the existing campus (referred to as "post" when discussing VMI). Long term plans called for the construction of a new maintenance facility to be constructed on "North Post", located to the north of Woods Creek. Additional parking was to be constructed on the southeast side of Main Street on property presently owned or to be acquired by VMI. This parking was to be primarily for Cameron Hall, the VMI gymnasium, and Alumni Memorial Stadium, their football stadium.

The current **Virginia Military Institute Post Facilities Master Plan** was adopted in May of 2006. Its scope is more ambitious as it calls for major renovations and expansions to VMI's facilities. The last major capital projects at VMI were completed in 1988. VMI's plan calls for major upgrades throughout the post to support the Superintendent's Vision 2039 and improve and expand the physical infrastructure to 21st Century higher educational standards.

The intent of Vision 2039 is to enhance four major focus areas: "Academics, Military, Athletics, and Physical and Cultural Environment." The facilities improvements proposed are intended to facilitate the achievement of the core of VMI's mission statement: "the Virginia Military Institute shall provide to qualified young men and women, undergraduate education of the highest quality - embracing engineering, science, and the arts - conducted in, and facilitated by, the unique VMI system of military discipline."

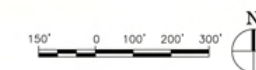
Much of the new construction is proposed on land adjacent to North Main Street, one of the primary entrance corridors into the City. Kilbourne Hall will be expanded into the present Buildings and Grounds facility. The Building and Grounds Department has been relocated to Lackey Park, adjacent to the National Guard Armory in Rockbridge County. The Alumni Field grandstands are being upgraded, and improved team and concession facilities are being added. The five brick bungalows located along Institute Hill across from the present Buildings and Grounds building are being demolished and replaced by an 82 car surface parking lot.

FIGURE 7.4
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
MASTER PLAN



MASTER PLAN UPDATE, MAY 2006

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA



CLARK • NEXSEN
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Long term proposals include a surface parking lot for 98 cars between Main Street, the Science Center and Mallory Hall to provide additional staff, faculty, and visitor parking, as well as support the parking needs for athletic events.

A new Field House and Aquatic Facility is proposed south of Cameron Hall. Parking for 236 cars will be provided under the building. Preliminary elevations of these building are shown in Figure 7.5. As part of the improvements along North Main Street, the power lines were recently placed underground, improving the aesthetics of this entrance into the City.

The Master Plan also proposes significant modifications and additions to “North Post” (designated the “back post” on the previous plan) to the north of Woods Creek. This area presently includes Patchin Field and other athletic facilities, cadet parking, and storage for buildings and grounds. The Plan proposes a new baseball stadium, additional playing fields, enhancements to the leadership reaction courses, relocation of the firing range, a stormwater management facility, and improvements to Woods Creek. The plan also proposes an elevated soccer field with a new 380 car parking area located beneath it which will provide parking for all cadet cars and parking to support events. The playing fields will require extensive excavation into the slope to the north of Woods Creek to create sufficient flat area for these fields. These plans will require that the Woods Creek Trail be relocated between the access road and Woods Creek. The plan includes environmental improvements to Woods Creek and the Woods Creek watershed.

There are also several significant proposals for the main post or “Academic Row”. A new Leadership and Ethics Center, to include a 500 seat auditorium and a conference center with a capacity of 800 people, is proposed behind Smith Hall. Previous drafts of the Master Plan included a second parking structure to support this facility; VMI planners indicate that parking will be provided on the grass of the Parade Ground when events in this building attract significant numbers of attendees from outside the post community. Up to 800 cars can be accommodated on the Parade Ground. Lejeune Hall is being demolished to provide for an addition to the barracks which will provide additional rooms to permit growth in the Corps of Cadets from 1350 to 1500 and will relieve overcrowding. Letcher Avenue is to become a pedestrian mall in front of the academic buildings and the barracks.

VMI also owns Lackey Park, located approximately one half mile north of Lexington. The eastern border of this property abuts Route 11 across from the College Square Shopping Center. The property contains approximately 80 acres. The National Guard Armory occupies a portion of this property. The VMI Physical Plant and the ROTC motor pool have recently been relocated there. The Master Plan for this property identifies a “tentative site” for parking for major events such as football games and parents weekends during inclement weather when the parade ground is closed. The remainder of the Lackey Park property will be retained for future use by the VMI ROTC departments and the National Guard for military exercises or to meet “future academic, athletic or economic development needs.”

FIGURE 7.5
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
PRELIMINARY ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS TO BE CONSTRUCTED ALONG NORTH MAIN STREET



PROPOSED FIELDHOUSE AND AQUATIC CENTER, MAY 2006

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

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Architecture & Engineering

The Superintendent of VMI and his staff have shown a willingness and desire to maintain open communications with the City concerning their development proposals. Although, by State law they are not required to comply with local zoning and building regulations, they indicate their intent to seek the City's comments on future development plans. The City should ensure that this dialogue continues.

Washington and Lee University Master Plan

The Institutional District Article of the City's Zoning Ordinance authorizes institutions like Stonewall Jackson Hospital and Washington and Lee University to submit master plans for the development of their campuses for review by the Planning Commission and approval by City Council. When adopted, these master plans serve as supplemental zoning, authorizing buildings and uses contained in these plans to be constructed or established in conformance with the approved plan. Parameters such as use, lot area, setbacks and yards, and parking are controlled either by the Zoning Ordinance or by an approved master plan.

The current **Campus Master Plan for Washington and Lee University** was approved by the City of Lexington in February, 1998 and amended in July, 2003 as required by the Institutional District regulations. The Master Plan map is shown in Figure 7.6. Figure 7.7, Implementation Plan, highlights the projects proposed in that Master Plan

Much of what was proposed in this Master Plan has been accomplished. The most significant projects have been the construction of the parking garage adjacent to Nelson and Washington Streets, the construction of the Elrod Commons, and the removal of surface parking and creation of green space between Doremus Gymnasium and the new Commons building. Five Sorority Houses were constructed to the west of Woods Creek and a new pedestrian bridge constructed across the Woods Creek ravine to provide convenient access from the sororities to the parking structure. New athletic fields have been constructed on the western portion of the campus in the area dedicated to these types of facilities.

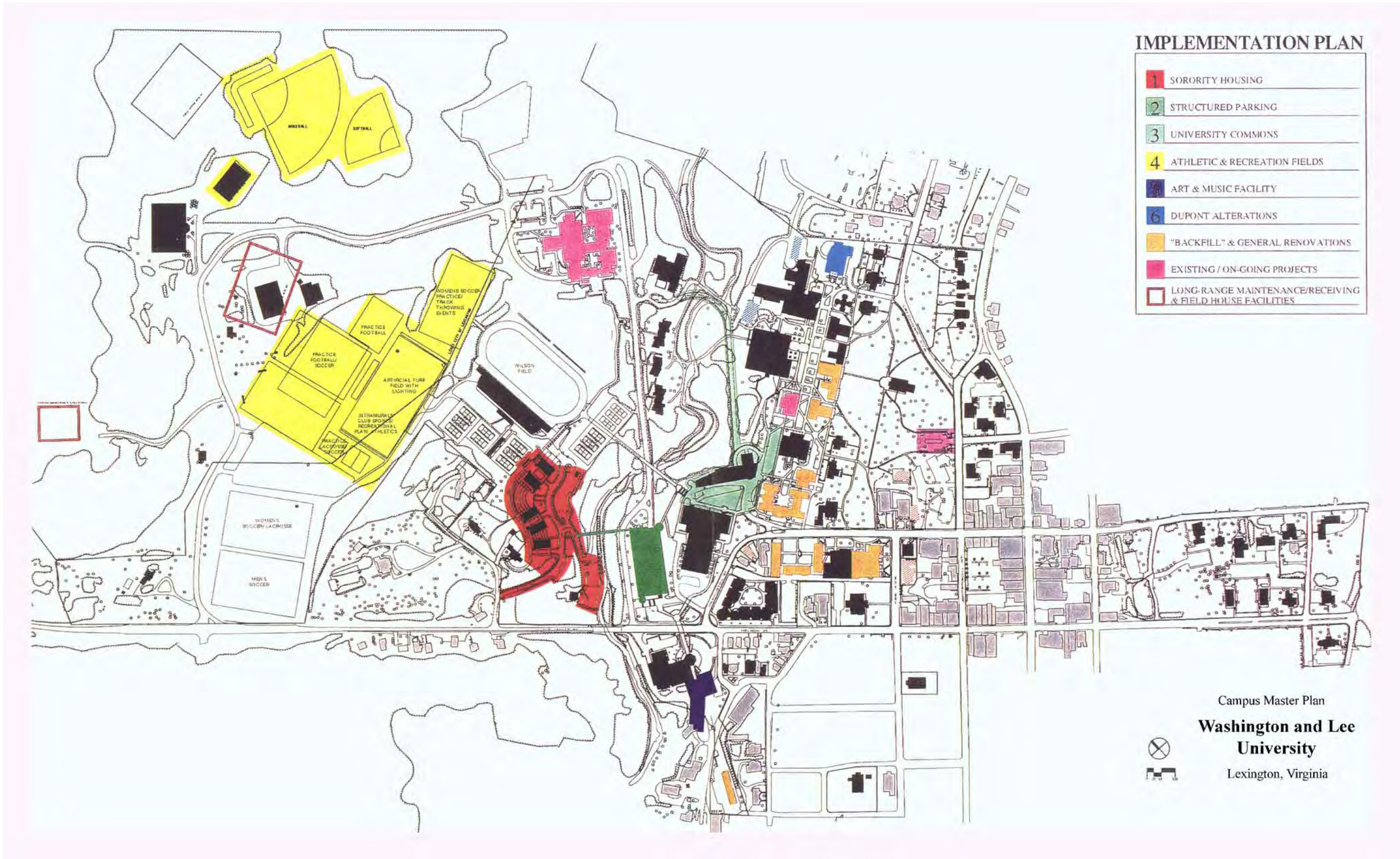
The 2003 Master Plan amendment expanded the Institutional District farther to the southwest between McLaughlin Street and Woods Creek to allow for the placement of a new Music and Arts building adjacent to the Lenfest Center.

All of the major new buildings proposed by this Master Plan have been constructed. The majority of the remaining projects proposed in the Master Plan are for the renovation of existing buildings.

FIGURE 7.6
CAMPUS MASTER PLAN
WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 7.7
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY



SURROUNDING LAND USE

As the supply of vacant land in the City has dwindled, development in the Lexington area has increasingly taken place immediately surrounding the City in Rockbridge County. Residential development has included several subdivisions, as well as numerous houses constructed on individual lots fronting on improved roads. There have been over 300 new lots platted within a one mile radius of Lexington since 2000. Figure 7.8 shows the locations of these new subdivisions.

Three shopping centers have developed on large tracts in close proximity to the City following the national trend of commercial centers locating near urban centers where larger tracts of land are available for large buildings and parking lots on major access routes into the urban core. Big box retailers including WalMart and Lowe's have constructed buildings adjacent to Route 11, north of the City. Several new hotels and restaurants have also been built in the vicinity of the Route 11, I-64 interchange north of the City.

Future development in Rockbridge County will ultimately affect the City's economy, transportation network, and land use pattern. To provide a better understanding of the nature of these changes, a portion of the Future Land Use map contained in the Land Use Plan adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in June of 2003 showing the planned land uses for the area surrounding the City is presented in Figure 7.9.

The principal land use designated on this map for these areas is "Suburban Planning Area" which is described as:

... areas bordering corporate cities and towns already characterized by existing development, as well as undeveloped properties with access to sound transportation links, public services and relatively strong growth pressures. They may contain commercial corridors that would fall under a corridor overlay district to promote quality development. Mixed residential, commercial and industrial uses would be promoted in these areas. Projects with more intensive uses would be required to buffer their activity from adjoining less intensive uses. Neighborhood development that brings residents closer to employment centers, goods and services is desirable. Walking and biking should be promoted to reduce the dependency on automobiles. It is desirable for new projects within these planning areas to connect to public water and sewer.

The second land use category designated for this area is "Rural Area". According to the Future Land Use Plan the purpose of this category is to:

... provide a vehicle by which prime agricultural and forestry lands, mountain areas, natural and scenic resources, critical watersheds, sensitive environmental areas, and other large tracts or land of rural character within the County may be preserved and

FIGURE 7.8
APPROVED SUBDIVISIONS SINCE 2000
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY

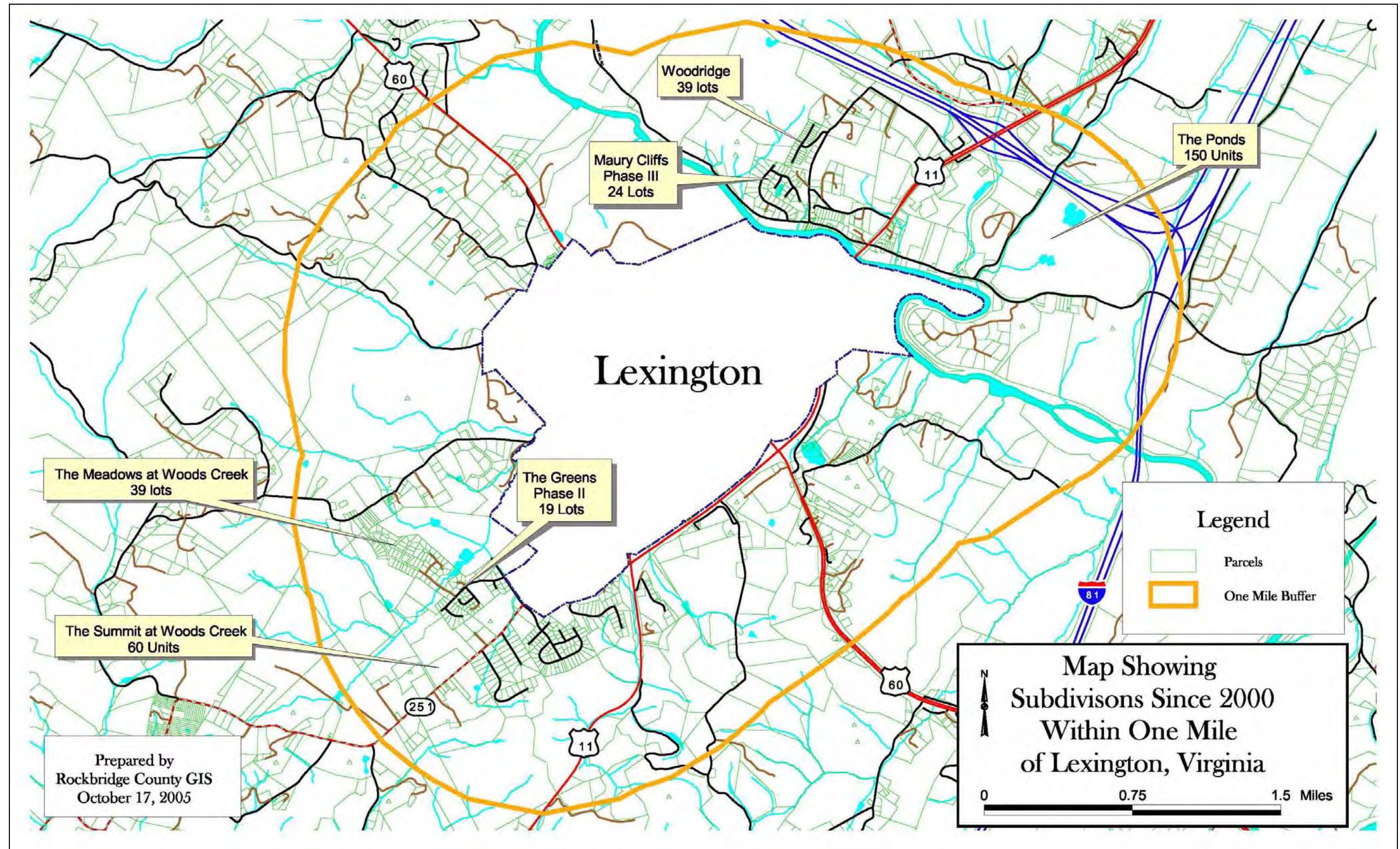
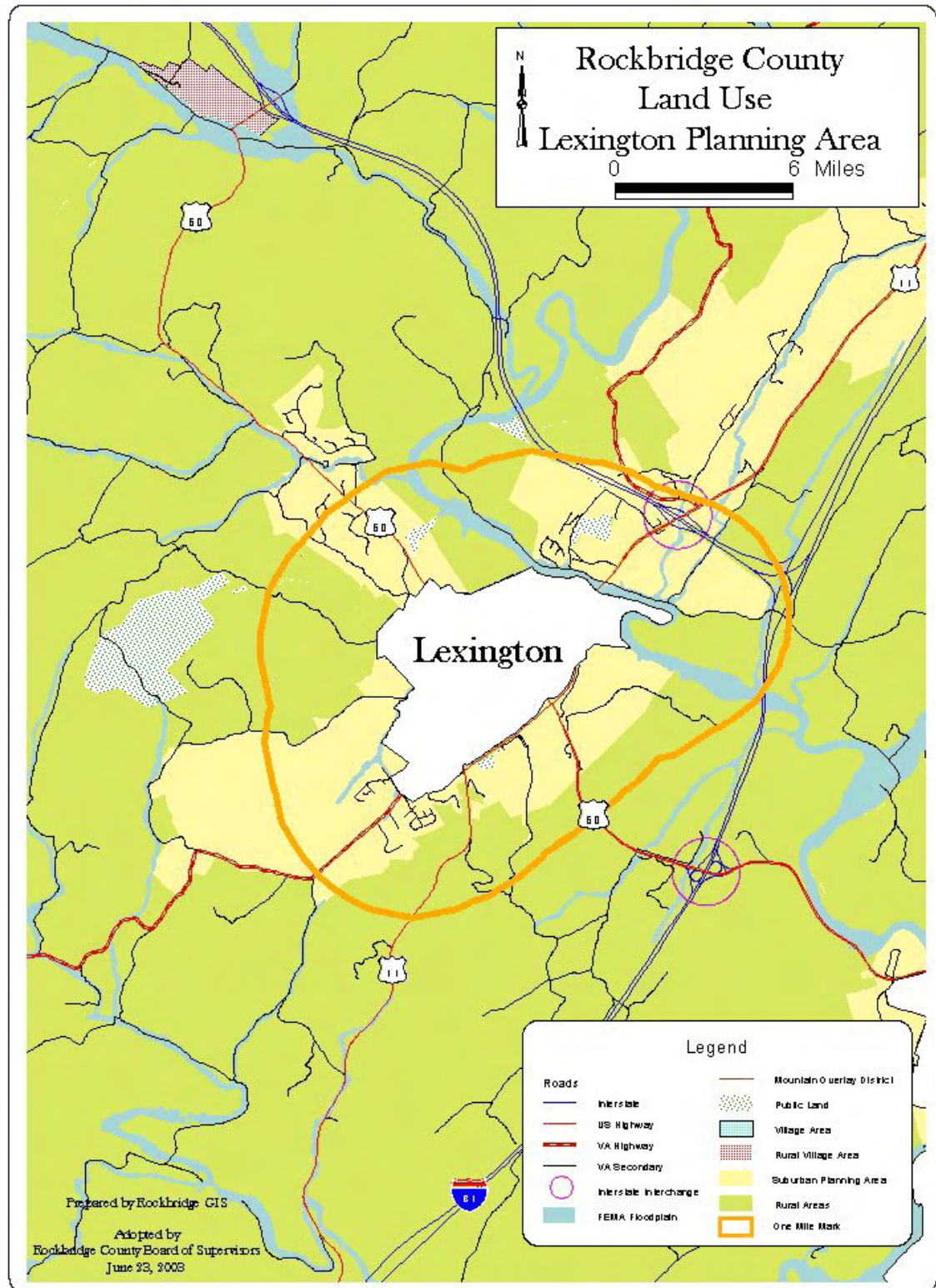


FIGURE 7.9
PORTION OF FUTURE LAND USE MAP
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY



maintained. It is the intent of this district to promulgate existing farm and forestry operations, conserve natural features and vegetation, eliminate scattered residential uses on small lots demanding public services, protect river frontages and water recharge areas, promote new agricultural and forestry production, and encourage the conservation and maintenance of sensitive environmental areas. Residential uses that are not related to and supportive of active agricultural and forestry activities are not encouraged.

Three of the implementation strategies included in that plan are of special relevance to the City:

- Recognizing that a certain amount of future growth and development is inevitable in Rockbridge County, the Future Land Use Plan should direct future development to occur on vacant or in-fill parcels located within or directly adjacent to developed areas (i.e. in and adjacent to the Cities of Lexington and Buena Vista).
- Encourage regional cooperation in developing planning goals, strategies, zoning regulations and permitting decisions with Lexington and Buena Vista, especially in the County “growth belt” around the two cities in order to promote land use compatibility.
- Consider the development of a special North Lee Highway overlay district or other zoning technique that will protect this scenic, rural highway from strip development, either residential or commercial, in sections between designated service areas.

Zoning is the primary mechanism for directing land use. Rockbridge County's current Zoning Map for the area surrounding the City is shown in Figure 7.10. The zoning districts and their purposes as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance are:

A-1 Agricultural and Limited Uses District: This District covers the unincorporated portions of the County which are located on mountain soils which present severe limitations to occupancy uses and are currently occupied by various open uses, such as forests, parks, and pasture lands. This District is established for the specific purpose of facilitating existing or future forest or agricultural operations, conservation of water and other natural resources, reducing soil erosion, protecting watersheds, and reducing hazards from flood and fire. Single family residences are permitted in this district with a maximum density of one dwelling unit for each two acres of developable land.

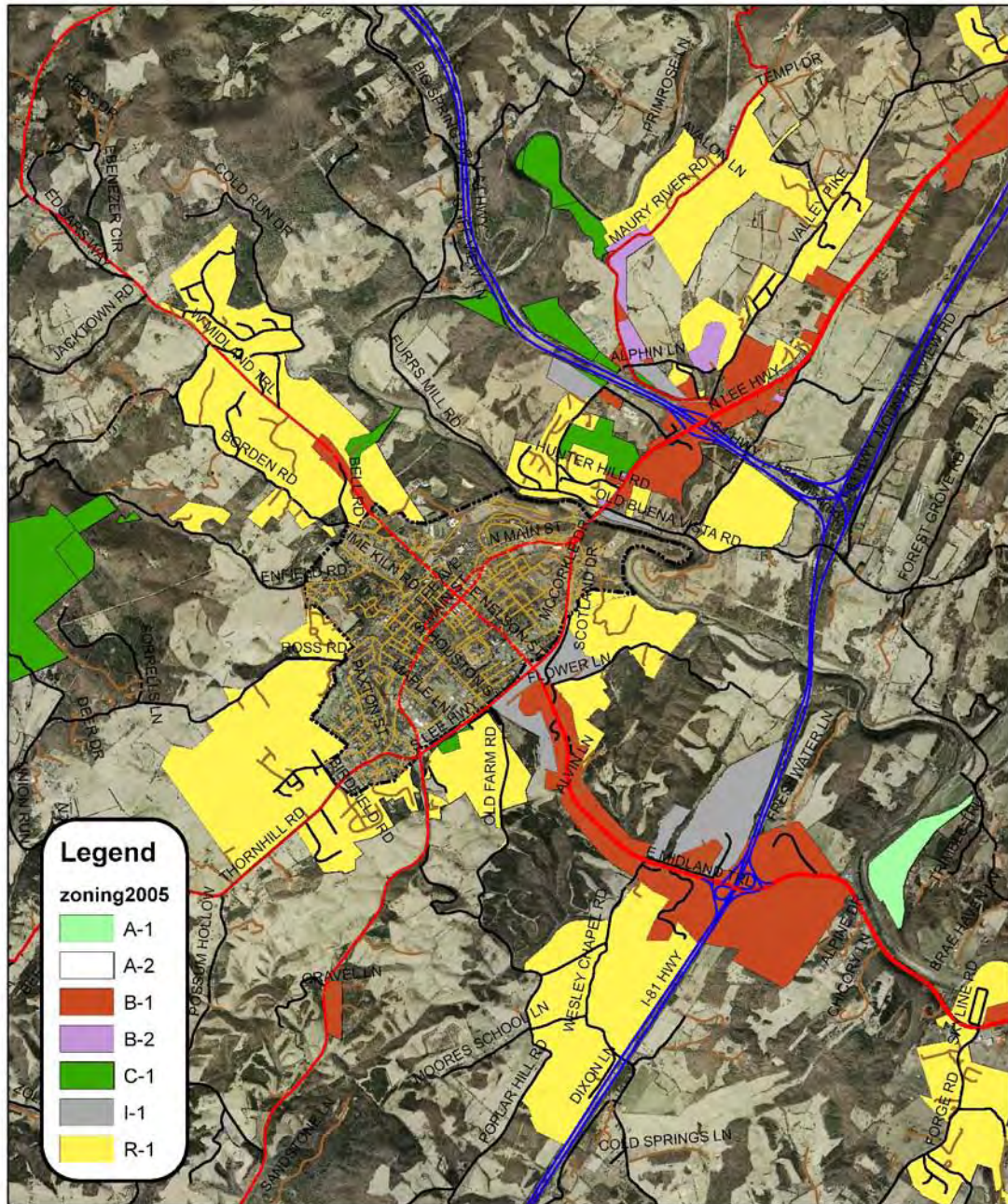
A-2 Agricultural and General Uses District: This District covers the portion of the County which contains the most productive agricultural and forest lands and represents the most valuable agricultural production lands. This District is established to protect existing and future farming operations, to conserve water and other natural resources, to protect watersheds, and provide for the orderly expansion of urban development. Single family residences are also permitted in this district, again, with a maximum density of one dwelling unit for each two acres of developable land.

R-1 Residential General District: This District is composed of certain quiet, low density residential areas plus certain open areas where similar residential development appears likely to occur. The regulations for this District are designed to stabilize and protect the essential characteristics of the District, to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life where there are children, and to prohibit all activities of a commercial nature. To these ends, development is limited to relatively low concentration and permitted uses are limited basically to dwellings providing homes for the residents plus certain additional uses, such as schools, parks, churches, and certain public facilities that serve the residents of the District.

Single-family dwellings; duplexes, and multi-family dwellings including townhouses and apartments are permitted in this District. The basic authorized densities for single family homes and duplexes are one building (one dwelling unit for single family homes, two for duplexes) for each half acre if public water and sewer are available and one dwelling unit for each acre of land if public utilities are not present. Multiple family housing densities vary from units per acre when water and sewer is available to units per acre when they are not.

B-1 General Business District: This District covers that portion of the County intended for the conduct of general business to which the public requires direct and frequent access. Permitted uses includes retail stores, banks, theaters, business offices, newspaper offices, printing presses, restaurants and taverns, and garages and service stations.

FIGURE 7.10
2005 ZONING MAP
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY



I-1 General Industrial District: The primary purpose of this District is to establish an area where the primary use of land is for industrial operations, which may create some nuisance, and which are not properly associated with, nor particularly compatible with residential, institutional, and commercial service establishments. The specific intent of this District is to encourage the construction of and the continued use of land for industrial purposes and to prohibit new residential and commercial use of the land and to prohibit any other use which would substantially interfere with the development, continuation, or expansion of industrial type uses in the District;

In addition, the County has created **Tourism Corridor Overlay Districts** along all of the major entrance corridors into Lexington - Route 11 (Lee Highway) north and south of the City, Route 60 (Midland Trail) east and west of the City, as well as along Route 39. According to the County Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of this District is to maintain, preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character, cultural significance, economic vitality, visual quality and architectural excellence of the County. The application of this district is intended to ensure that the major existing and planned routes of tourist access, as well as other public access to the County's historic areas are developed and maintained in a harmonious and compatible manner.

Within this District, any erection, reconstruction, exterior alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, razing, relocation or demolition of any building, structure, signs, fences, walls, light fixtures, outbuildings, pavements, grading, site improvements, significant landscaping features or other appurtenant element must be reviewed by the Tourism Corridor Review Board and approved by the Board of Supervisors prior to the issuance of a permit.

There has been significant cooperation in joint planning between the City and County since the last Comprehensive Plan was completed. Two joint planning efforts have been especially successful.

The first was the study of the City and County entrance corridors and interstate interchanges, which was commissioned and funded jointly. This project was undertaken to create more workable and attractive roadside development patterns for the Lee Highway and Midland Trail corridors and for the areas around the Interstate 81 Interchanges. The plan which resulted provided an overall vision for these entrance corridors and Interstate interchanges and recommended design principles and planning strategies to achieve them.

Among the constructive steps emanating from this planning effort were the creation of entrance corridor overlay districts establishing design guidelines and design review for development within these corridors and revised sign regulations which dramatically reduced the allowable sizes of roadside signs in both the City and the County.

The second is the recently completed South Lexington joint planning effort conducted by a committee composed of planning commission members, as well as planning staff from both jurisdictions. This committee was charged with studying the impact of increased development in the headwaters of the Woods Creek watershed in the vicinity of Thornhill and Ross Roads. They evaluated issues related to utilities including public water and sewer, transportation, stormwater management, and land use. As a result of the recommendations made by this group, the County Planning Commission recommended and the Board of Supervisors approved the down zoning of approximately 860 acres of land from R-1 to A-2.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE CITY'S PREVIOUS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The previous Comprehensive Plan contained numerous recommendations concerning land use which have been implemented by the City. Those recommendations were developed to achieve the following goals and objectives:

GOAL: Encourage well conceived and planned land uses which recognize and amplify the City's unique small town character and which add to the City's tax base

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the City's residential neighborhoods as attractive, desirable places to live

OBJECTIVE: Ensure the establishment of appropriate transitional areas between commercial uses and lower density residential uses

The City made several significant modifications to its development regulations to implement these regulations including:

- The creation of a second single family housing zoning district more consistent with the characteristics of the more suburban residential neighborhoods in the City to better protect their integrity
- Down zoning several parcels of land which had previously been zoned for multiple family housing in areas of the City considered to be inappropriate for housing of that density because of limited access and incompatibility with adjacent neighborhoods
- Down zoning developed residential areas adjacent to the City's commercial centers from commercial to residential to better focus commercial activity within those centers and to provide more appropriate transitions between commercial uses and nearby residences
- Several amendments were also made to the Zoning Ordinance including increasing the minimum lot size in the R-1, General Residential District and reducing the allowable densities for townhouses and garden apartments.

That plan also identified several remaining large parcels of vacant land and made recommendations concerning their possible development. These recommendations were intended to address the following objective:

OBJECTIVE: Identify vacant land with development possibilities and potential redevelopment areas and encourage development patterns which will be beneficial to the City both economically and aesthetically

Most of those areas have been developed during the past ten years. Most significantly:

- Fairwinds - this 27.5 acre tract has been subdivided for single-family homes
- The Donald tract - 7.15 acres on which Penrith, a single-family home subdivision, is now located
- Sunnyside - This 23.6 acre parcel has been incorporated into the Kendal community. All but a very limited portion has been dedicated for open space. This commitment is assured by a proffer offered by Kendal as part of a conditional rezoning request. Formal action by City Council would be required to allow this land to be developed.

Several areas were also identified as sites for potential redevelopment. These sites included:

- The site of the previous sewage treatment park at Jordan's Point adjacent to the Maury River. This site has been incorporated into Jordan's Point Park as recommended by the plan
- Maury River Middle School - This property was sold to Rockbridge County for continued use as a school. The City has a right of first refusal to purchase the property if the County ceases to use it for educational purposes

LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following goals and objectives contained in the previous Comprehensive Plan remain valid and are being retained:

OVERALL LAND USE GOAL: Encourage well conceived and planned land uses which recognize and amplify the City's unique small town character and which add to the City's tax base

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the City's residential neighborhoods as attractive, desirable places to live

OBJECTIVE: Review the present Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to ensure that its provisions and boundaries are consistent with the character of existing residential neighborhoods

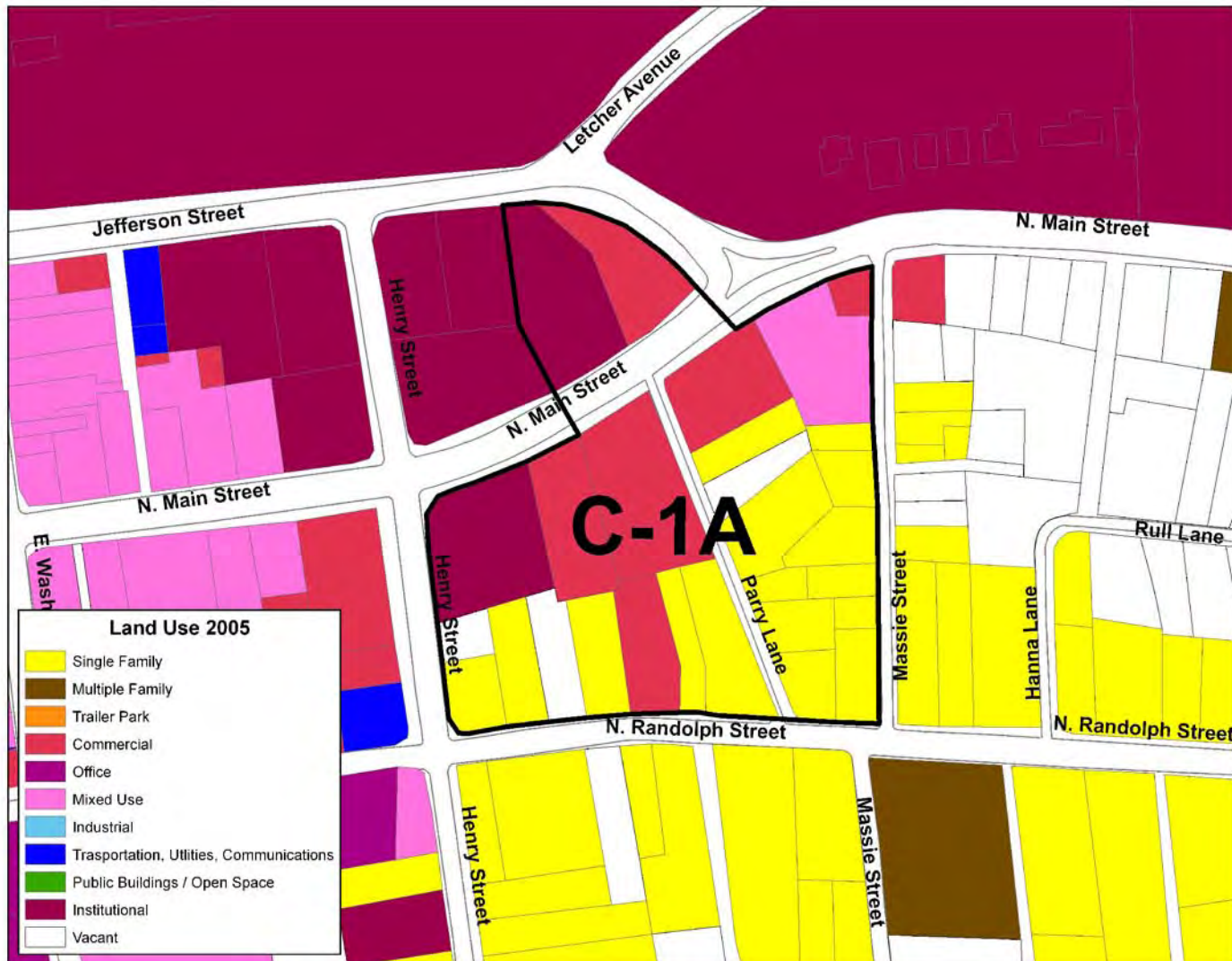
OBJECTIVE: Ensure the establishment of appropriate transitional areas between commercial uses and lower density residential uses

Transition Area Between the Downtown Commercial District and the Residential Area along Randolph and Massie Streets

The numerous changes described in the previous section addressed almost all of the areas which were inappropriately zoned and in conflict with the objectives listed above. One area which has not been addressed is along the west side of Randolph Street from Henry Street to Massie Street and down Parry Lane and Massie Street to the rear of the commercial properties fronting on North Main Street. Although all of the buildings in this area, with one exception, are presently used for residential purposes, this area is included in the downtown commercial zoning district, C-1A. See the attached map, Figure 7.11.

Single-family dwellings are not permitted in the C-1A district. As a result, new homes could not be built on the remaining vacant lots within this area and the existing houses in this district are nonconforming uses. As a result, they could not be rebuilt if they were destroyed. The City's economic development policy is to focus downtown commercial activity in those areas where it presently exists rather than to allow businesses to disperse into surrounding residential neighborhoods. Conversion of residences within this area into commercial buildings would be counterproductive to that policy. Finally, zoning a portion of a residential neighborhood for other than residential purposes tends to be a destabilizing force and detracts from the quality of that neighborhood.

**FIGURE 7.11
PRESENT ZONING
NORTH RANDOLPH AND MASSIE STREETS**



The C-1A district authorizes a wide range of commercial and office activities. No off street parking is required for development in this district. Parking for nonresidential uses introduced into this area would have to be accommodated on the street if business and property owners did not choose to provide off street parking. No yards are required in the C-1A district so new buildings could be built to the property lines. All of these characteristics are unsuited for new development, as well as for the expansion and conversion of existing buildings in this neighborhood.

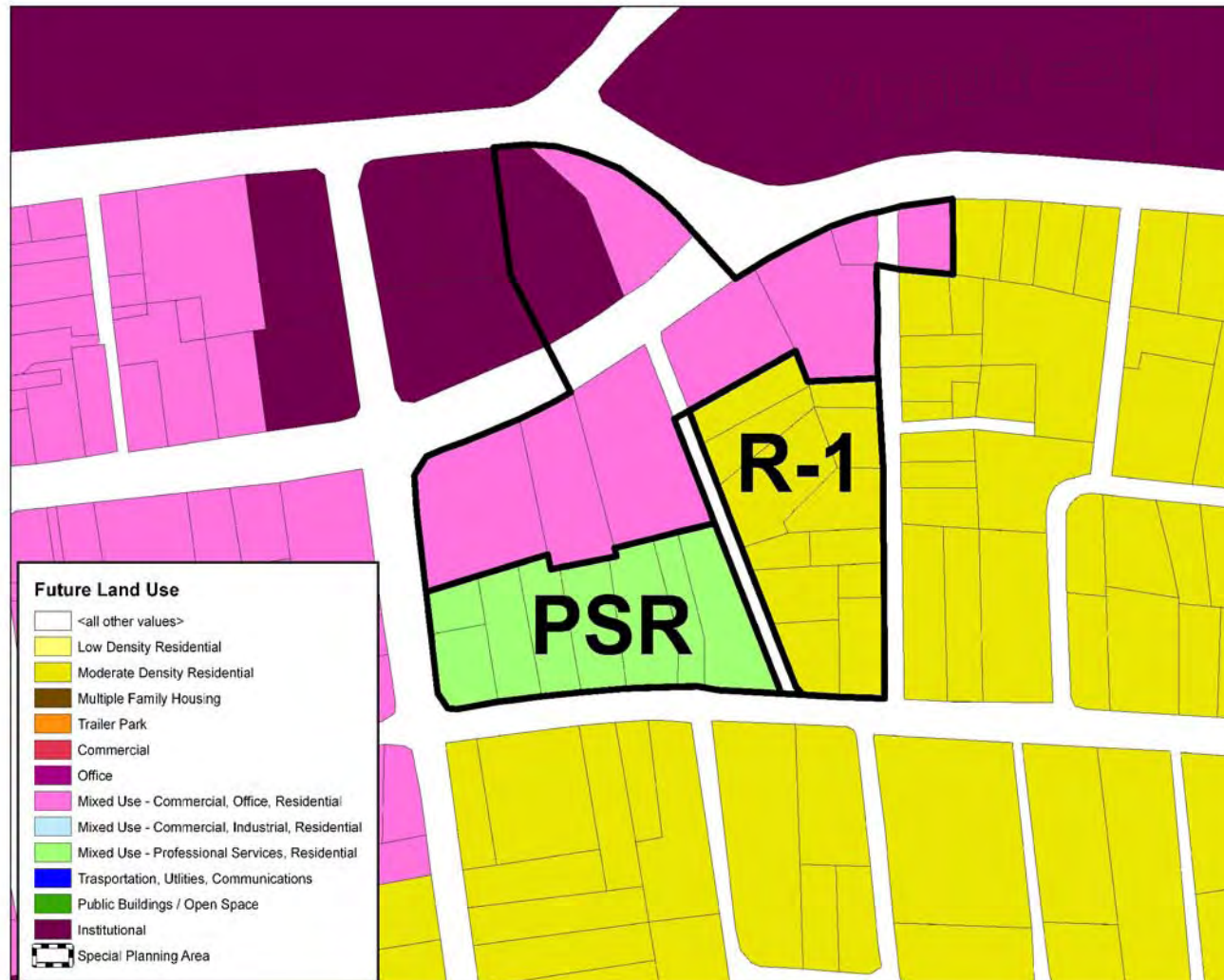
The houses and vacant lots along Massie Street and Parry Lane should be limited to residential use to protect the existing residences along these narrow streets and to preserve their residential character. Offices of an appropriate scale would be a viable option for the properties fronting Randolph Street between Henry Street and Parry Lane provided adequate off street parking is provided, buildings are at a scale consistent with existing buildings, and adequate yards are provided. Commercial businesses are not appropriate for this block.

For all of these reasons, the zoning boundaries in this area should be redrawn to place the properties along Massie Street and Parry Lane in the General Residential District, R-1.

The west side of Randolph Street between Henry Street and Parry Lane should be rezoned to Professional Services-Residential (PSR) to permit professional offices, as well as single-family residences along this block face. The PSR district requires off street parking to be provided. Commercial uses are not authorized in this district. New buildings along this block should be located close to the street, similar to existing buildings. The PSR District requires a 25 foot front yard. Variances should be sought to allow set backs appropriate for this block. Emphasis throughout this area should be on the reuse and expansion of existing buildings rather than on demolition and new construction. The architecture should also be consistent with the existing houses in this neighborhood. To accomplish this, the entire area should be added to Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation District. This would make new construction and demolition of any building subject to review and approval by the City's architectural board. The area is presently in the Historic Downtown Preservation District which has even more extensive design review.

The proposed zoning changes are shown in Figure 7.12

**FIGURE 7.12
PROPOSED ZONING
NORTH RANDOLPH AND MASSIE STREETS**



The Block Bounded by Nelson, McLaughlin and Glasgow Streets

A second small area which should be addressed is the block bounded by Nelson, McLaughlin and Glasgow Streets. This block is composed of buildings which were initially single-family homes. Most continue to be used for that purpose. The zoning for half of the block was changed from Multiple Family Residential (R-M) to General Residential District (R-1) by the last comprehensive rezoning. The present zoning is illustrated in Figure 7.13. The balance of the block should also be returned to R-1 to protect the integrity of these houses and reflect the true nature of the uses in this block. This proposal is shown in Figure 7.14.

FIGURE 7.13
PRESENT ZONING
BLOCK BOUNDED BY NELSON, McLAUGHLIN AND GLASGOW STREETS

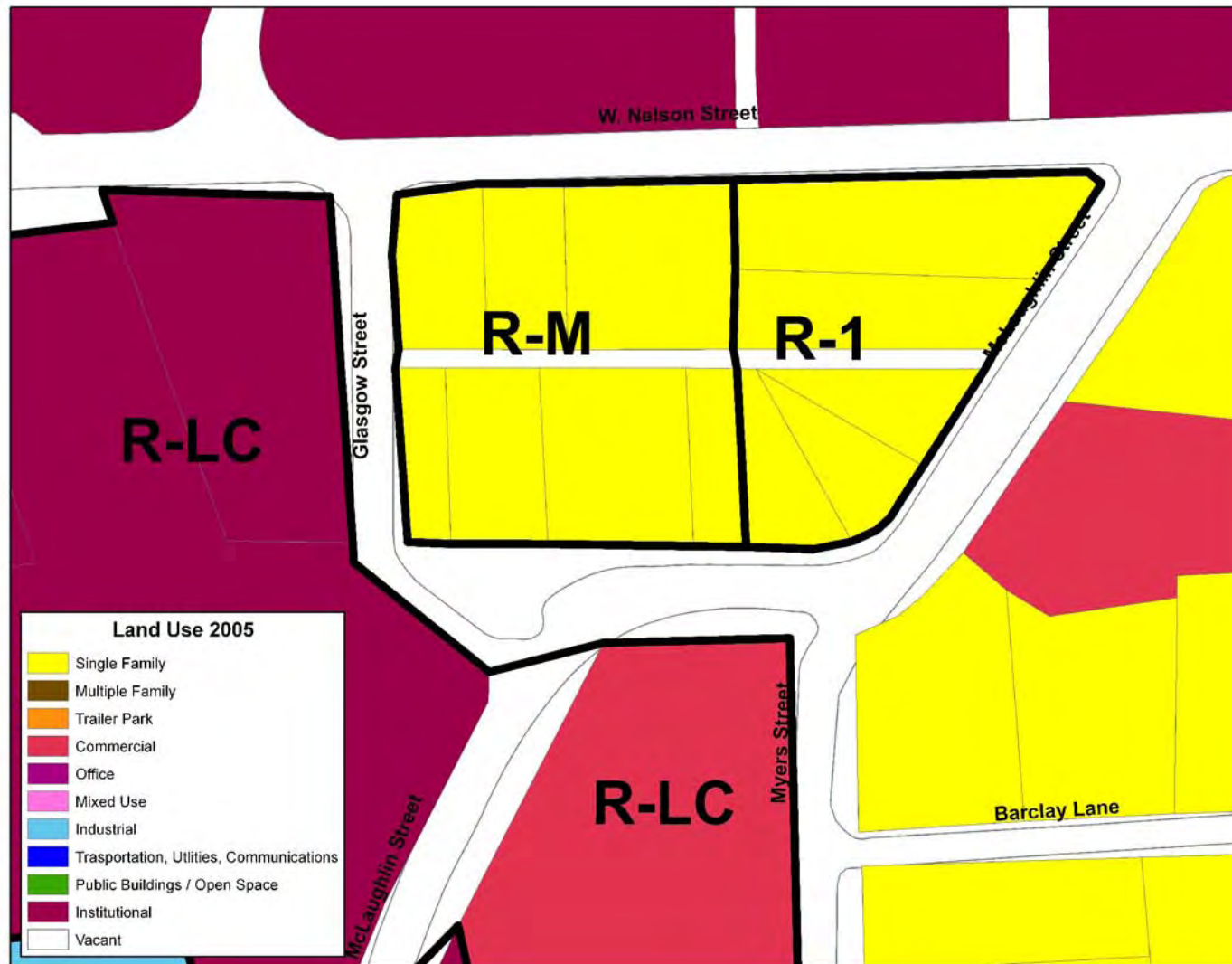
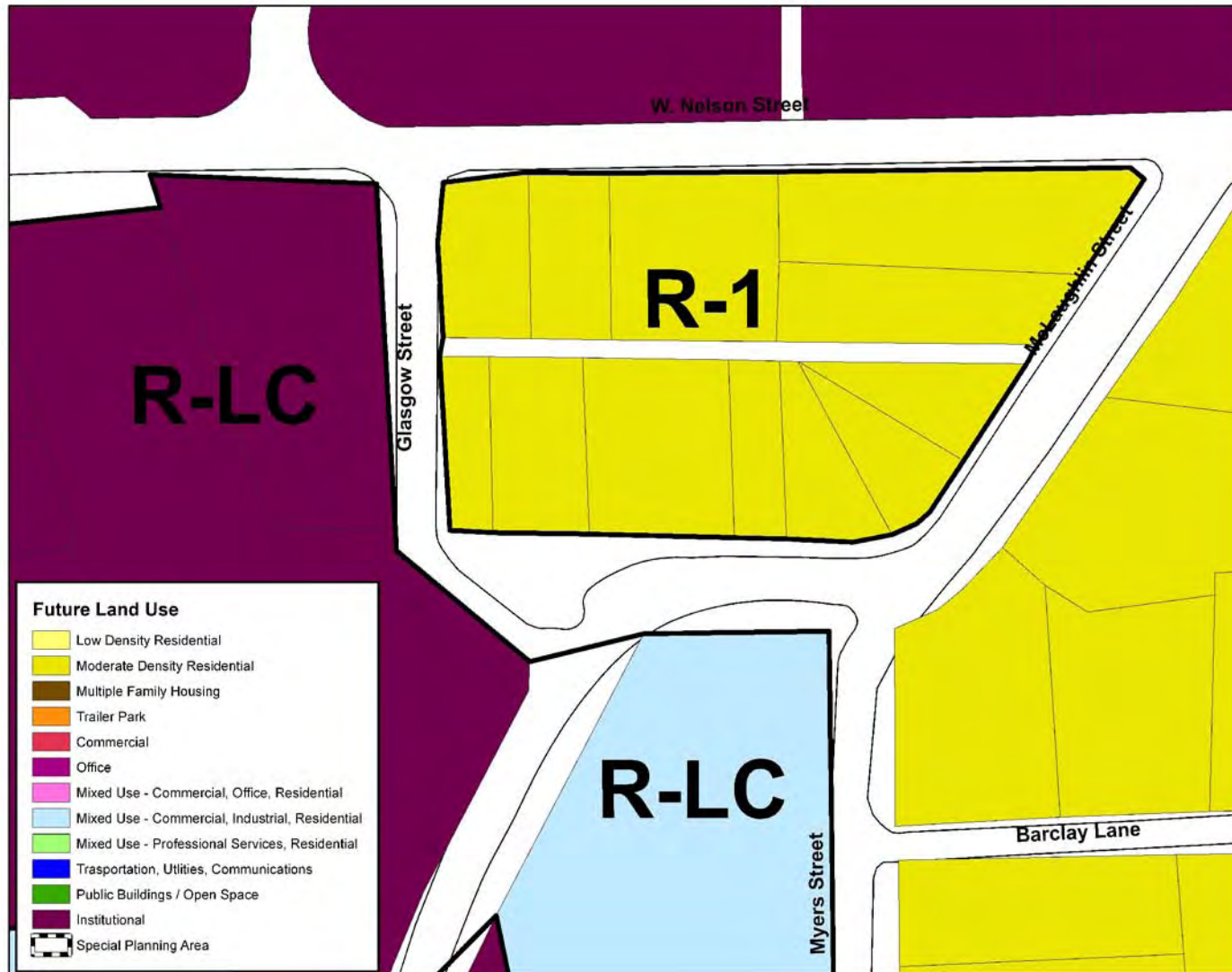


FIGURE 7.14
PROPOSED ZONING
BLOCK BOUNDED BY NELSON, McLAUGHLIN AND GLASGOW STREETS



POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

OBJECTIVE: Identify vacant land with development possibilities, areas with potential for in-fill development and potential redevelopment areas and encourage development patterns which will be beneficial to the city both economically and aesthetically

Lexington can anticipate continued development of its remaining vacant land, as well as pressure for redevelopment of underdeveloped sites. It is important that the city have a vision of how this development and redevelopment should look, and implement rules and development guidelines to achieve that vision.

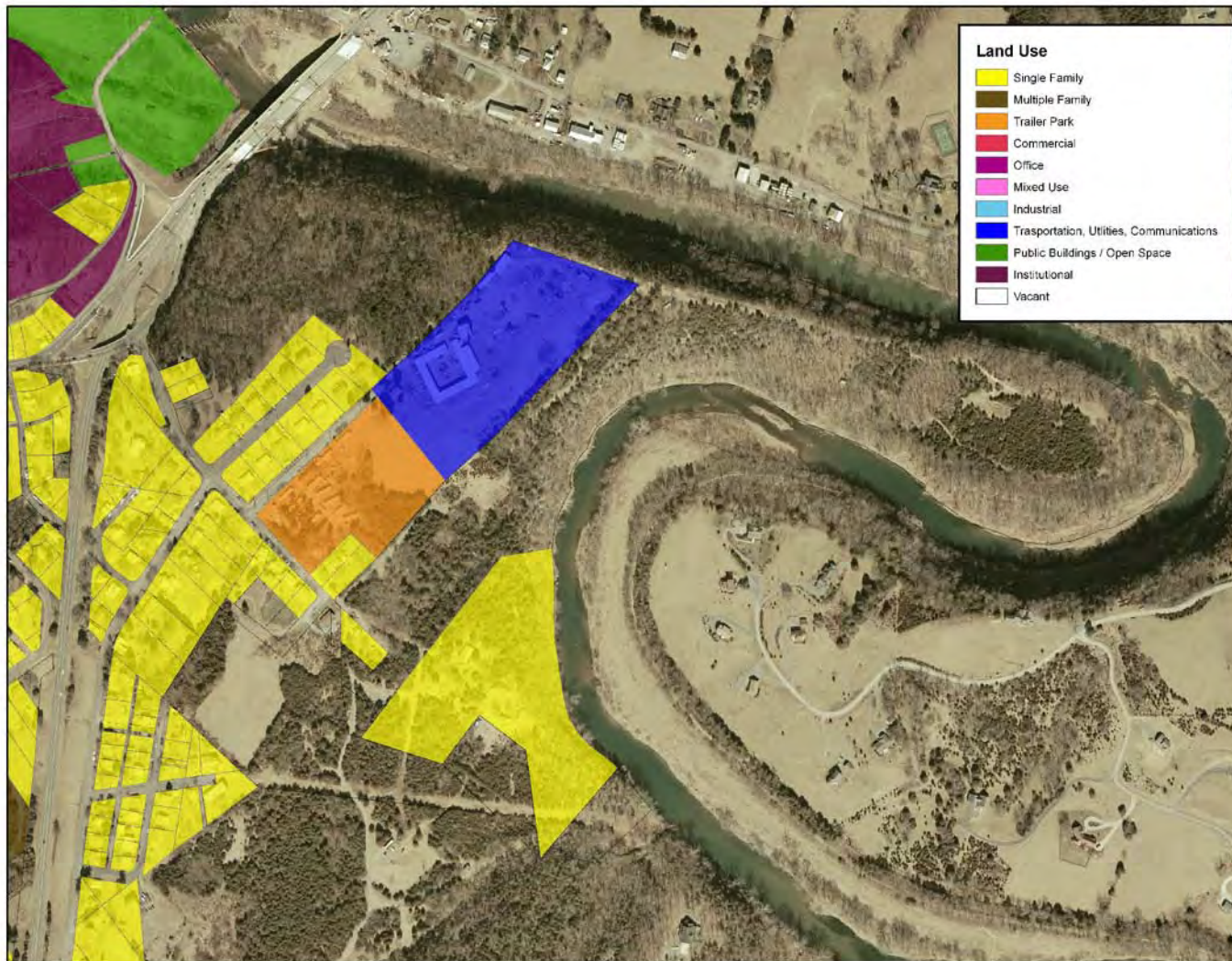
East Lexington Bluffs Area

This area is the easternmost portion of the City. It abuts the Maury River and includes a peninsula bordered by the river on three sides. The river frontage is mostly steep bluffs. This area has much of the remaining vacant land in the city, most of it in fairly large tracts. The majority of this land is zoned for residential use including Suburban Residential (R1-A), General Residential (R-1) and Multiple Family-Mobile Home (R-MH) districts. The City's Public Works Department property yard is zoned Commercial District (General) (C-3). Figure 7.15 shows the present land use pattern and Figure 7.16 reflects the current zoning for this area.

There are several constraints which will influence the ultimate development of this area. There are numerous rock outcroppings and sinkholes which may limit development and significantly increase development costs both for the installation of required utilities and for the construction of buildings. Access to the area is from Campbell Lane which has a limited right of way. In fact, the right of way width to the east of Shop Road is only 30 feet. Water and sewer are both available. The Public Works Department property yard with its industrially related activities is located in the heart of this area as is the City's only mobile home park.

A wide range of development proposals have previously been studied for this area ranging from clustered housing units to mixed use development including housing and offices. None has come to fruition, apparently because of the high development costs associated with this land.

FIGURE 7.15
EXISTING LAND USE
EAST LEXINGTON BLUFFS



**FIGURE 7.16
PRESENT ZONING
EAST LEXINGTON BLUFFS**



Although there are significant development constraints, the area remains attractive because of its location overlooking the Maury River and the amount of vacant land it contains.

This area is being designated a "Special Planning Area" on the future land use map. This designation indicates that the City of Lexington encourages and will consider innovative development proposals and evaluate them on their specific merits. Conditional Rezoning, the use of the Planned Unit Development, or Conditional Use provisions of the zoning ordinance may well be utilized to implement an acceptable proposal.

OBJECTIVE: Designate the East Lexington bluffs area as a "Special Planning Area" to encourage innovative development proposals and encourage conditional rezoning, Planned Unit Development, or Conditional Use provisions of the zoning ordinance to encourage quality development

The South Main Street Commercial Area

This area along South Main and Waddell Streets offers great potential for additional commercial development, as well as possible redevelopment. The area is zoned C-3, Commercial District (General Commerce). See Figure 7.17. Portions are currently underutilized. As the greater Lexington area grows and prospers, this area could attract significant development and redevelopment interest, especially if the City facilitates and encourages it.

One site of specific interest is the five acre Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) maintenance yard located on Waddell Street. VDOT has indicated that they would like to relocate this facility outside of the City. This site has economic development potential for business or industry. The City should be prepared to acquire this land if it becomes available and to work with The Rockbridge Partnership, the area's economic development agency, to identify creative economic development proposals for this potentially valuable property

Redevelopment plans for the VDOT property or other property in this area should anticipate that the uses on nearby properties may also change as the economic potential of the area is realized. An overall urban design concept plan and design standards for new or rehabilitated buildings should be prepared by the City to enable integrated site design throughout this area. The City should also continue to invest in public improvements such as additional sidewalks and streetscape improvements to enhance the area and act as a catalyst for private investment.

OBJECTIVE: Designate the C-3 zoned area in South Lexington as a Special Planning Area to facilitate new construction and redevelopment that reflects the unique character of Lexington and creates a more pedestrian-friendly commercial area

OBJECTIVE: Develop a concept plan and design manual that portrays the intended character of the site design, buildings, landscaping and public improvements for this area

OBJECTIVE: Facilitate improvement in this area by continuing the entrance corridor beautification program, including improved pedestrian access between the commercial area, nearby residential areas, the Brewbaker Field recreation area and Maury River Middle School

FIGURE 7.17
PRESENT ZONING
SOUTH MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL AREA



The East Nelson Street Commercial Area

The City has worked with property owners in the East Nelson Street commercial area over the past several years to upgrade and improve the appearance and functionality of this important commercial area. These improvements were focused on three major components - increased landscaping both along the street and within parking lots, improved traffic and pedestrian flow and safety, and improved signage. The current zoning for this area is presented as Figure 7.18.

Improved traffic safety was achieved by reducing the number of curb cuts, improving their location, and providing interconnections between adjacent commercial areas wherever possible.

Pedestrian safety was enhanced by completing the sidewalk system along the street, installing pedestrian phases on the traffic lights, and creating pedestrian pathways within and between commercial establishments wherever possible. The numerous large pole signs were replaced with much smaller signs on monument type bases. Since this project was initiated, two older underutilized properties have been redeveloped for more intensive commercial activities and several other buildings have been rehabilitated and in some cases expanded. The City has also revised its zoning ordinance to require design review for all new and renovated buildings in order to ensure that new development is compatible with the unique historic and architectural character of this community. This project has involved not only significant new development but also working with business and property owners to undo that which was not appropriate for a City proud of its heritage, its appearance, and its exceptional quality of life.

Recognizing that there will likely be additional development, as well as further redevelopment and expansion of underutilized parcels, the City should update its design plan for this area and develop a design manual to guide future development for the area. The focus of this effort would be to make this area an extension of the downtown reflecting a carefully considered 21st Century expression of our evolution as a town.

OBJECTIVE: Designate the C-2 zoned area along East Nelson Street as a Special Planning Area to facilitate new construction and redevelopment that reflects the unique character of Lexington and creates a more pedestrian-friendly commercial area

OBJECTIVE: Develop a concept plan and design manual which describes and illustrates the intended character of the site design, buildings, landscaping and public improvements for this area

Guiding new development and redevelopment in both of these commercial areas will enhance the desirability of adjacent land, facilitate additional positive economic development, and achieve compatible relationships with nearby residential areas. Their designation as Special Planning Areas also enables creative and innovative approaches to redevelopment that increase the opportunities to achieve the desired design objectives, as well as to maximize the economic return to the investor.

FIGURE 7.18
PRESENT ZONING
EAST NELSON STREET COMMERCIAL AREA



City owned property adjacent to the Rescue Squad building on Spotswood Drive

Several uses have been proposed for this property of approximately 2.1 acres shown in Figure 7-19. The Cemetery Advisory Board has recommended that this land be made available for the expansion of Stonewall Jackson Cemetery since it is estimated that the existing cemetery land will be exhausted in about five years. Other uses which have been proposed for this site are moderate density housing and offices, including those that are medically related.

One recommendation is that the site be utilized for a mixed income housing project with a percentage of the units made available to low- and moderate-income persons. Such a project would help the city address its affordable housing needs. A mixed use project to include both housing and offices has also been suggested. These would all seem to be viable alternatives because of the proximity of the property to both the Hospital and the downtown. All of these options would involve selling the property to a private developer who would be contractually obligated to construct a previously agreed upon project.

All of these alternatives would bring additional high value development to the City, add to the City's tax base and bring additional people into the downtown and East Nelson Street commercial areas. The City believes that there is sufficient land remaining on the hospital campus to respond to increased demand for medical offices and that this is the preferred location for such offices.

For these reasons, this Plan endorses the concept of taxable development on this site and recommends that low- and moderate-income housing be a part of the development of this property to help meet this area's increasing demand for affordable housing. The City should actively explore the possibility for creating a public/private partnership to facilitate making affordable housing a part of the development of this land.

OBJECTIVE: Enable private, taxable, residential development on the city-owned property adjacent to the Rescue Squad building on Spotswood Drive

Vacant Land on the Interior of the Block adjacent to Brewbaker Field

There are two large lots on the interior of the block, immediately adjacent to Brewbaker Field, which are undevelopable because of their limited access to surrounding public streets. These lots are shown on Figure 7.20. These parcels would be valuable additions to Brewbaker Field. The City should be prepared to acquire these properties if they come on the market to allow for expansion of the park.

OBJECTIVE: Acquire additional interior parcels for the expansion of Brewbaker field if they become available to expand recreational facilities, as well as green space within the City

FIGURE 7.19
CITY OWNED PROPERTY ON SPOTSWOOD DRIVE



FIGURE 7.20
VACANT PROPERTIES ADJACENT TO BREWBAKER FIELD



VMI AND WASHINGTON AND LEE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The campuses of Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute occupy significant portions of the City's total land area. Both are in prominent locations. Their students comprise over forty percent of the City's population. Their presence contributes significantly to the local economy.

Both W&L and VMI have significant plans for the further development of their campuses. It is extremely important for the City to establish and maintain effective communications with the planners and decision makers at both of these institutions to ensure the compatibility of this development with the surrounding residential and commercial areas of the City.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain open communications with the administrations of both Institutions to ensure that their development plans are presented to the City and the community and that the City has an opportunity to participate in and comment on development decisions

Virginia Military Institute

VMI has developed, and is presently working to fund and implement, a Master Plan which will result in dramatic changes along North Main Street and Woods Creek. It may also have continuing impact on the residential communities located around it. As an agency of State government, VMI is exempt from regulation by the City of Lexington; however, the Superintendent and his staff have kept City Council, the Planning Commission, and City staff apprised of these plans. It is important that this dialogue continue.

There are three areas of primary concern about these plans. These are parking, the impact of the present post and its proposed expansion on surrounding residential neighborhoods, and protection for, as well as active restoration of Woods Creek as it flows through the post.

Much of the land along North Main Street now proposed for new construction was initially acquired by VMI to provide parking for the athletic facilities located along the street including Cameron Hall and Alumni Field. VMI has developed small surface parking lots on some of this land, but almost all of the parking for major athletic events, including football and basketball games and other events conducted in Cameron Hall, is provided along North Main Street, the Parade Ground and other parking lots at VMI. Because this parking is inconvenient to the spectators, parking expands along Diamond and Randolph Streets into the residential neighborhoods located there. This makes it difficult for residents to find parking close to their homes and adversely effects the quality of life in these areas.

The City believes that addressing the present parking deficiency and providing parking adequate to support future development is a critical component of the overall development of the North Main Street area of the VMI post. Without it, the present parking pressures in this area will get significantly worse as new buildings are added without adequate parking to

support them. Additional parking along residential streets to the east will occur, further degrading the character of these residential communities. VMI has proposed two new surface parking lots adjacent to North Main Street, as well as parking under the proposed field house and aquatic center to address this problem.

These proposals may well solve the day to day parking needs of the post, but they will not provide adequate parking for peak events. VMI opens up the parade ground for parking at these times, but because of the convenience of the residential streets to the facilities in which these events are held, many people still choose to park there. The City and VMI are beginning to explore ways to cooperatively address this problem. Limiting access to the streets entering the Diamond Hill neighborhood combined with increased publicity and signage directing people to parking provided on post is one possibility. Limiting parking to residents of these streets during peak events combined with publicity and signage is also being considered. VMI has begun the use of parking shuttles from lots outside the City for major events as another means to address this problem.

OBJECTIVE: Work cooperatively with VMI to assure adequate on-post parking is provided so that new development does not negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Work cooperatively with VMI encourage those who attend peak events held at VMI facilities to park in areas provided by the Institute rather than in the adjacent residential neighborhood

It is also critical that VMI maintains reasonable transitions between its post and the residential neighborhoods to the south and east, because the institutional scale of its buildings and the level of activity associated with them is fundamentally different than the scale and residential qualities of these communities. Of specific concern is the proximity between the proposed Aquatic Center and Massie Street, a residential street with houses on both sides of it.

A second area is Dorman Lane which runs parallel to a parking lot associated with Alumni Field. VMI owns two vacant lots on the south side of Dorman Lane across from a parking lot associated with Alumni Field. These lots abut houses on both Carruthers and Randolph Streets. It would be damaging to these houses and their neighbors if these lots were converted to an institutional use or made into a parking lot. The City recommends that these lots be donated to Threshold, the City's affordable housing program, so that they can be converted to private residential use and provide a reasonable transition between the athletic fields and the adjacent neighborhood. Such residential use is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. A second option would be to sell the lots to a private individual.

OBJECTIVE: Assure appropriate transition between post buildings and nearby Neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Encourage VMI to donate the two VMI owned lots on Dorman Lane to the city's Threshold Project for affordable housing

As the Natural Features chapter of this plan describes in some detail, the City has an active multi-faceted strategy to preserve and enhance the health of Woods Creek which runs along the edge of North Post through VMI. The development which VMI has undertaken in this area has seriously impacted the creek. In fact, the creek runs in an underground pipe beneath the existing athletic fields for almost one thousand feet. Much of the remaining length of the creek is significantly degraded with a very limited riparian buffer which contains many alien species and is bounded by concrete on both banks below the barracks. VMI's plans for the Woods Creek area call for the addition of a riparian buffer and removal of alien species. Protection and enhancement of the creek is, and should remain, an active part of the North Post development plan to ensure that it is not further degraded by construction activities and that restoration and enhancements are incorporated into planning for this area.

OBJECTIVE: Urge VMI to make protection and enhancement of Woods Creek an active part of the North Post development plan

The current Master Plan proposes that eight additional properties along North Main Street be acquired by the Institute “to improve the functionality of the Post and the beauty of this approach to the Institute and the City of Lexington.” The City has stated its strong objections to these proposed acquisitions. All but one of these properties are private residences. Several have historic value. The remaining property is owned by the City and presently houses the Rockbridge Area Relief Agency’s food pantry. They are designated for these uses on both the Zoning Map and the Future Land Use map included in this chapter.

The City can protect this area as well, or better, than VMI. The City has created two Residential Historic Districts which require that the Architectural Review Board approve any demolitions within these districts. Creating a third district to encompass these properties would provide additional assurances to VMI that the existing character of this entrance will not be significantly altered.

The City will continue to oppose any additional land acquisition by VMI. Additional expansion would further erode the City's tax base, remove additional houses from an already limited housing stock, and could lead to the demolition of additional historic structures.

OBJECTIVE: Strongly encourage Virginia Military Institute to remain within its present boundaries to preclude any further loss of its limited housing stock, as well as the loss of limited taxable land

The City of Lexington and the Rockbridge Partnership (the area’s economic development arm), have strongly encouraged the development of a high quality technology park in the Lexington area to respond to the changing nature of the state and national economy. Such a facility would be designed to attract the growth sectors of the economy such as service, information, finance and technology. One of the most attractive sites for such a facility would be to incorporate it into the overall development plan for Lackey Park. Discussion with VMI should continue to encourage their endorsement and support for such a facility. More will be said about this recommendation in the Economy chapter of this plan.

The Superintendent of VMI and his staff have expressed their willingness and desire to maintain open communication with the City concerning their development proposals. Although, by State law they are not required to comply with local zoning and building regulations, they have indicated their willingness to seek the City's comments on future development plans. The City should ensure that this dialogue continues. Although VMI has done an excellent job of informing the City of its current Master Plan, as well as its efforts to implement that plan, the City was not contacted nor involved during the development of the plan. The City believes that the earlier it is involved in any such planning process, the more effectively we can articulate our perspective and identify what we believe to be opportunities, as well as challenges. This plan continues to emphasize the importance of the City being given the opportunity to participate as early as possible in the VMI planning process.

Washington and Lee University's Preliminary Master Plan

Washington and Lee University (University) has retained a consulting firm to prepare a new Master Plan for its campus. According to University officials, the focus of this plan will be inward to the existing campus. They do not anticipate any further expansion of the University beyond its present boundaries. The University has identified five critical components to this new plan. Each of these is described below with the planning guidelines and issues which have been developed for each one.

The Academic Core: The capacity of the front campus is limited by the need to preserve its historic character and landscape. The University has focused on creating capacity by moving non-academic activities out of this area. They intend to renovate the buildings in the core to make them more usable. They have retained an architect to study the buildings along the Colonnade and devise strategies for upgrading them without sacrificing their historic integrity. Finally, they will look for opportunities to create more in-fill space, the strategy that was used to connect the two science buildings with an atrium in 1991.

Residential Life: The University is assessing how it might improve, replace, and expand its student residences to improve the residential life experience for its undergraduate and law students.

Athletic Facilities: The University believes that something will have to be done about the oversized and rusting stadium seating, as well as improving the experience for both athletes and spectators there. Doremus gymnasium is also dated and difficult to navigate. In the long term, they believe that a new indoor pool and field house will be needed. The University is interested in working cooperatively with other local institutions to develop a shared aquatics facility to conserve land and minimize operating costs.

The "Back 40": This refers to the entire back campus, which has seen a lot of ad-hoc change in the past. Current uses include the law school, athletics, student housing, parking, natural reserve areas for scientific study and conservation, and preservation of archaeological resources. The University intends to carefully identify areas where change can occur, areas that need to be preserved, and areas that need restoration and improvement. One promising idea is to better explain and display the 18th Century campus that was centered around Liberty Hall. A number of these buildings have been located and excavated in the past, but few people are aware that this was an entire, bustling campus between the 1780's and the 1820's, not just one building. The University is considering an alumni facility, faculty housing, additional parking for sports events, and the relocation of its Physical Plant building into this area.

Strengthening Campus Boundaries Entrances and Circulation: This will include how the University addresses its perimeters and entrances and if new pedestrian or vehicular circulation patterns are needed.

The fact that the University, VMI and the City are all focusing on long term planning creates a unique opportunity for this community. As the University architect stated in a presentation to the City Planning Commission:

“I think it’s exciting that Washington and Lee, VMI, and the City are all advancing new plans and ideas at the same time, and that all are prepared to share and modify those plans and ideas to make a cohesive plan for the entire city. I’d like to see one plan drawn that included us, rather than stand-alone plans that have to have translations made between them. With proper coordination, the University’s plans can help the city accomplish its objectives, and represent opportunities rather than threats.”

Washington and Lee’s present position is that they do not anticipate further expansion of the University beyond its present boundaries. The focus of the Master Plan, now in the initial stages of development, will be inward to the existing campus according to University officials.

The City strongly endorses this perspective. Expansion of the University beyond its present bounds would place additional stress on a small City with over half of the property within its limits already tax exempt. The City will continue to encourage Washington and Lee to look within its present holdings for future growth rather than acquiring additional land. Not only would additional expansion further erode the City's tax base, removal of viable commercial activities from an already limited downtown is harmful to the health and vigor of this vital commercial district.

OBJECTIVE: Strongly encourage Washington and Lee to program new construction within the present University boundaries to preclude any further loss of local business and industry, as well as the loss of limited taxable land

The second issue which remains a source of ongoing dialogue between the City and the University is parking. The construction of the parking garage has alleviated much of the previous unmet need for on campus parking; however, recently W&L planners acknowledged that the use of the garage is nearing capacity. The University continues to explore management strategies to utilize available parking more efficiently and effectively. They have added over 40 additional parking spaces on campus since the completion of the parking garage and continue to seek locations to construct additional surface parking on campus.

They have also been exploring the possibility of jointly constructing a parking structure with Virginia Military Institute at the site of a current surface lot used jointly by the two institutions. Such a garage would serve the north side of the W&L campus, a portion of the campus presently underserved for parking, as well as the new leadership center and the Marshall Foundation at VMI. The City believes that this proposal has significant potential to address the parking problems of both institutions.

Another more limited parking problem is the current W&L policy precluding students who live within one-half mile of the campus from using campus parking between 8 am and 6 pm, Monday through Friday. Students from the Davidson Park area who do not wish to walk or ride a bike drive and then find an on-street parking space as close as possible to the University. Since parking on these streets serves the downtown commercial area, student cars make it more difficult for patrons of these businesses, as well as others living in apartments and houses in or near the downtown, to find convenient parking. It is, therefore, in the City's interest to encourage Washington and Lee University to address the problems created by this parking policy. This can be accomplished either through the provision of additional parking on campus or through the adoption of additional and more restrictive parking regulations for these students.

The City should also ensure that the new University's Master Plan evaluate the current parking situation and make specific proposals for addressing the parking requirements of the campus. In the interim, Planning Commission and City Council should ensure that parking is addressed in all development proposals submitted to the City for review and approval.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to work with W&L to explore ways to address their parking needs including the construction of additional on campus parking facilities and enhanced management strategies

Communication and cooperation between the University and the City are excellent at all levels. This cooperation should serve as the basis for continued dialogue and cooperation as the problems and issues identified above are addressed and resolved.

Cooperation between the Two Institutions

W&L and VMI continue to explore means by which they may jointly address current problems and meet future needs. Areas being discussed include parking, possible joint use of facilities including the proposed VMI aquatic center, and improved interconnections between their campuses. The City believes that these initiatives have the potential to efficiently, effectively and creatively address issues of mutual concern including those which impact the City. The City will continue to encourage and support these cooperative efforts.

CITY INPUT INTO COUNTY LAND USE DECISIONS IN AREAS AFFECTING THE CITY

Much of the future growth in the greater Lexington area is going to be outside the boundaries of the City, in areas for which land use decisions will be made by Rockbridge County. The nature and extent of this growth will inevitably impact the City.

The County's Land Use Plan emphasizes a growth management scheme which discourages random, scattered development in favor of a more compact, coherent, and sustainable pattern. Development is encouraged in the urban fringes of Lexington, Buena Vista and Glasgow "where growth can be accommodated by existing public infrastructure".

While the City supports the concepts incorporated in this strategy, we are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of development surrounding the City on the quality of life of Lexington residents. This is especially true for those whose houses front on residential streets which provide access to the downtown and to the shopping areas along Route 11 to the north of the City. Houston Street, Ross and Enfield Roads, Jackson Avenue and the streets which run between Jackson Avenue and Main Street are all experiencing increasing through traffic as a result of development in the County. These are narrow streets with limited rights of way and houses set fairly close to the street with limited front yards. There is no ability to widen these streets without severely impacting the character of these residential neighborhoods. In fact, the City is seriously studying the possibility of installing "traffic calming" measures in an effort to reduce both the speed and the number of cars using these streets.

For these reasons, the City strongly requests that the County carefully evaluate the extent of the Suburban Planning Area which surrounds the City of Lexington and more fully evaluate the impact of growth within this area on residential neighborhoods within the City.

As the transportation chapter will describe in more detail, we also request that as they evaluate proposals for new development, consideration be given to ways to redirect traffic from overtaxed streets to those better able to carry increased volumes of traffic, such as Thornhill Road and Nelson Street. An excellent example of this strategy are the plans for constructing a new collector street connecting Ross Road with Route 251 as part of the development of the land which lies between these two roads beyond the Country Club. Protection of possible rights of way for either new roads or the expansion of existing roads should also be made a part of development approvals.

OBJECTIVE: Collaborate with the county on ways to develop road connections for existing and new development that channel traffic onto existing or new County collector roads to minimize increased traffic flow through Lexington's residential neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Urge State Legislators to pass laws which enable regulations which require the timing of development as to be concurrent with road improvements necessary to handle both direct and cumulative impacts

The County Land Use Plan includes a strategy to “encourage regional cooperation in developing planning goals, strategies, zoning regulations and permitting decisions with Lexington and Buena Vista, especially in the County “growth belt” around the two cities, in order to promote land use compatibility.” The State enabling legislation requiring the establishment of planning commissions specifically authorizes cooperation between planning commissions “to coordinate planning and development among localities. Planning commissions may appoint committees and may adopt rules to affect such cooperation.”

The City also remains concerned about the nature and extent of the development in its entrance corridors. Within the City, significant investment has been made to address both aesthetic and functional concerns including traffic, pedestrian circulation, size and number of signs, architecture, and landscaping. The County has adopted Corridor Overlay Districts for both of these corridors.

The City is concerned that the 60 East corridor is presently zoned for commercial development from the City limits to the I-81 interchange. The County Future Land Use map shows the Suburban Planning Area extending only to the top of the hill to the east of the City. It is important to the economic vitality of the City to maintain attractive entrances from the Interstates into the City’s downtown. A commercial strip from the City limits to I-81 along East Midland Trail would seriously degrade the character of this corridor. It also disbursts commercial activity out yet another of the major corridors leading into Lexington.

The recommendations contained in the Entrance Corridors and Interstate Interchanges Plan prepared jointly by the City and County envisions clustering commercial activity at more intensive nodes rather than having it extend linearly along these corridors. We urge the County to consider preserving this corridor from intensive commercial development by revising their Zoning Ordinance to reflect the limits shown on the Future Land Use map.

One of the City’s significant recent initiatives is the cooperative effort to restore and enhance Woods Creek and its watershed as described in detail in the Natural Features chapter. Much of the watershed, including its headwaters, is in Rockbridge County in one of its significant growth areas around the Country Club. As development continues, Rockbridge County must aggressively enforce measures to address both the quantity and the quality of stormwater runoff associated with new construction. A stormwater management ordinance addressing both of these aspects has been drafted and is proposed for adoption both by the City and the County. Adoption is recommended by the Final Report of the South Lexington Joint Planning Committee.

The City's ability to influence these decisions is limited by its ability to persuade County decision-makers of the validity of the City's concerns and recommendations. The City must continue to make efforts to develop more effective dialogue and cooperation with Rockbridge County. Growth and development in this area are a result of the assets and attributes of both the City and the County. Both benefit when either is protected or enhanced.

FUTURE LAND USE AND SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS

More than any other section of the Comprehensive Plan, the land use plan will have a visible effect on the future of the City. As required by State law, the land use plan must include "the designation of areas for various types of public and private development, business, industrial, agricultural, conservation, recreation, public service, floodplain and drainage, and other areas."

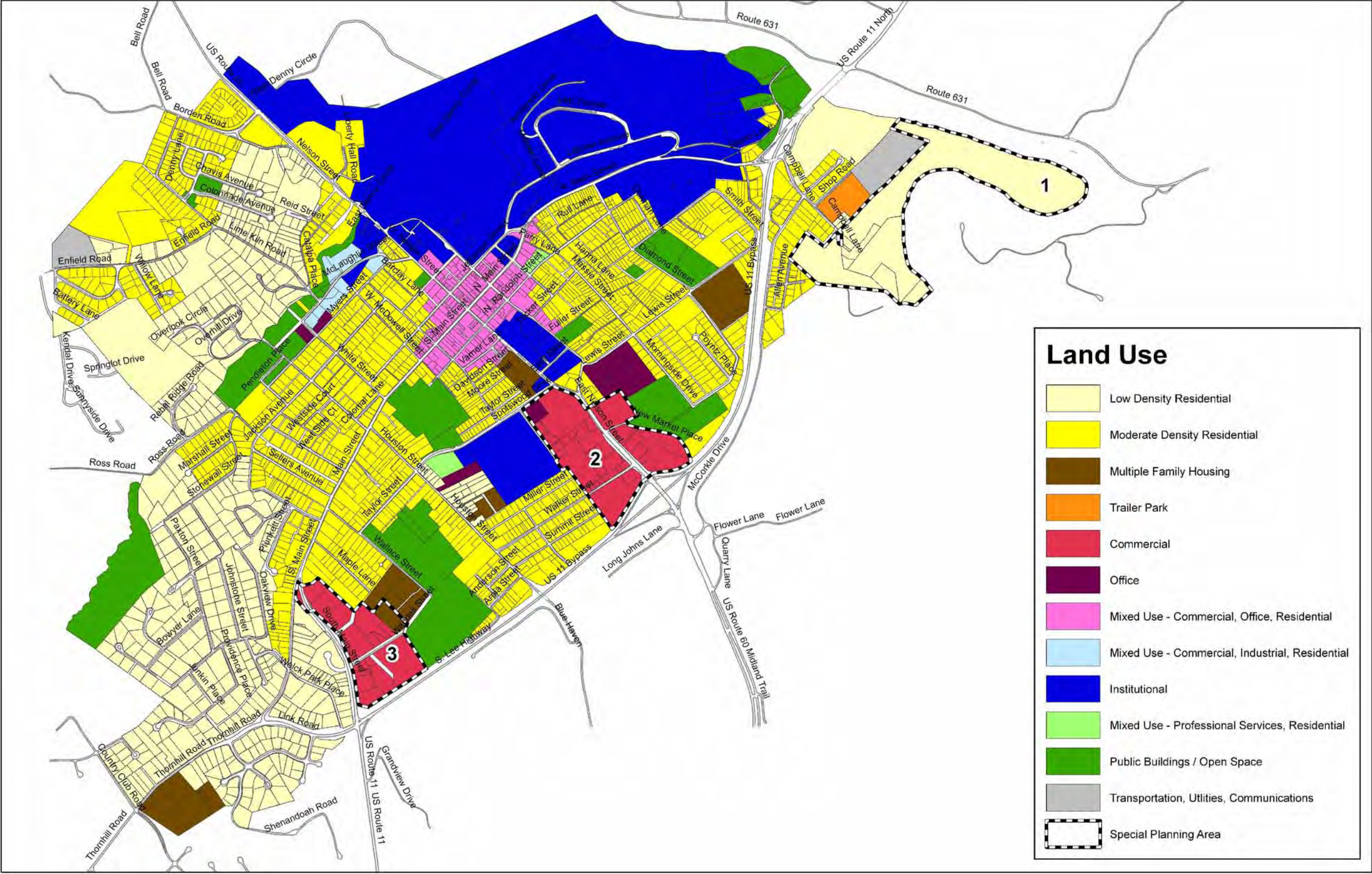
The determination of appropriate future land uses was made only after the physical and location characteristics of tracts of land throughout the City were evaluated. The following elements were considered: existing land use and zoning for the property, as well as surrounding property; accessibility; and physical constraints to development. The application of these criteria to the areas of the City for which changes are recommended have been described throughout this chapter. The Future Land Use map, Figure 7.21, was prepared to graphically reflect these recommendations.

The Planning Commission and City Council will give careful consideration to the land use designations contained in this Plan when making future land use decisions and recommendations. Future land use decisions which are inconsistent with the recommendations will not be supported unless this document is first amended.

In addition to the designations contained on the Future Land Use map, several areas are designated as special planning areas. These are designated with a number which corresponds with the descriptions presented below.

1. **East Lexington Bluffs** - The development opportunities and constraints associated with this area of the City have been discussed previously in this chapter. The area is mostly vacant or underdeveloped. Because of its location, adjacent to the river on three sides and the steep bluffs, it is a unique and attractive area; however, access is limited and utilities have not been extended into this area. For these reasons, this area has been designated a Special Planning Area to indicate that the City will consider innovative development proposals for this land and evaluate them on their specific merits. Conditional rezoning, planned unit development or conditional use provisions may be used to implement an attractive development proposal.

FIGURE 7.21
FUTURE LAND USE



2. **East Nelson Street commercial area** - The City has worked with property owners in this area over that past several years to upgrade and improve the appearance and functionality of this important commercial area. Recognizing that there will likely be additional development in this area, as well as further redevelopment and expansion on underutilized parcels, the City should update its design plan for this area and develop a design manual to guide future development for the area. The focus of this effort should be to make this area an extension of the downtown, reflecting a carefully considered 21st Century expression of our evolution as a town.
3. **South Main Street commercial area** - This area along South Main and Waddell Streets has great potential for additional commercial development, as well as possible redevelopment especially if the City facilitates and encourages it. The City should continue to invest in public improvements such as additional sidewalks and streetscape improvements to enhance the area and act as a catalyst for private investment. An overall urban design concept plan and design standards for new and rehabilitated buildings should be prepared to facilitate integrated site design throughout the area.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

The City's land development regulations which include the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision regulations should be reviewed and updated and the zoning map should be amended to implement the recommendations contained in this chapter.

Three mechanisms have been recommended extensively in this chapter as means to implement its recommendations. These are described in more detail below.

Planned Unit Development

Planned Unit Development, or PUD, permits more flexible development practices than conventional zoning by permitting design flexibility from such traditional siting requirements as setbacks, side yards, and height restrictions. Units may be clustered together to preserve additional open space or important natural features, conserve land, and hold down utility costs. Instead of building houses uniformly over an entire tract, the developer of a PUD project may build at higher densities in certain areas and preserve open space or natural features in others. This technique can provide housing variety and amenities that can only be provided in a project planned as an entity rather than lot by lot. The PUD process is intended to encourage high quality and innovation in development. PUD may benefit both the developer and the City through careful and creative site planning. PUD may also be advantageous for smaller sites, as well as for in-fill sites by allowing efficient and beneficial use of a particular site. The objective of Planned Unit Development is not simply to allow exceptions to otherwise applicable regulations but, rather, to encourage a higher level of design, amenities, or preservation of critical natural features than is likely to be achieved utilizing the requirements of the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.

The PUD provisions in many localities also authorize a mix of housing types, both single- and multiple-family within a project. Others encourage a variety of land uses, by permitting certain nonresidential uses to be incorporated into a project. The present City PUD provisions do not permit either of these.

The City's present Planned Unit Development regulations should be reviewed and improved to more effectively articulate and promote their intended purposes. Specifically, the statement of intent for the PUD provisions should be strengthened and more precise evaluation criteria for proposed projects developed to encourage more effective utilization of this important planning tool.

OBJECTIVE: Review and update the Planned Unit Development regulations to encourage more effective utilization of this important planning tool

Conditional Use Permits

Conditional use permits are required for uses which, because of their character, may or may not be appropriate for a particular location. These uses are specified as conditional uses in the various zoning districts contained in the Zoning Ordinance. They must be authorized by City Council after receiving a recommendation from the Planning Commission and are evaluated in terms of their impact on the surrounding neighborhood. City Council may deny a request for a Conditional Use Permit if it does not conform to standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance concerning the effects of the proposed use on the community and the surrounding neighborhood. Conditional use permits allow the Planning Commission to recommend and City Council to impose conditions on a development proposal to reduce the effects of the use on adjacent properties or to achieve desired development characteristics.

Conditional Zoning

Conditional zoning is a procedure authorized by the Code of Virginia which allows localities to accept conditions voluntarily offered or “proffered” by an applicant for rezoning. These conditions are commitments not required by the zoning ordinance for the proposed use. Conditions offered by an applicant and accepted by the locality become part of the rezoning and are legally binding on the property unless changed by a later rezoning.

Proffers should be encouraged for any rezoning proposal to assist in the implementation of this plan. Proffers and conditions should be encouraged to preserve existing natural features, encourage planned development, retain stream valleys as open space, provide a variety of housing types, provide housing for the elderly, and include pedestrian accessibility and significant landscaping. In all cases, conditions and guidelines should support the uniqueness of Lexington and its quality of life.

Possible Creation of a Housing and Redevelopment Authority

The Code of Virginia authorizes local governments to create a Housing and Redevelopment Authority when confirmed by a local referendum. Oversight of a local Authority would be by a board appointed by City Council. Funds for its operation would be provided by the City. Powers granted to the Housing and Redevelopment Authority include the ability to assemble land for development or redevelopment purposes, the creation of public/private partnerships to implement development or redevelopment plans, and the ability to acquire funds for this development including, specifically, the construction of affordable housing.

This chapter suggests the possibility of development or redevelopment of some of the significant sites remaining in the City by utilizing partnerships between the public and private sectors. A Housing and Redevelopment Authority may be the best way to implement these recommendations. The Housing chapter describes increasing problems with the private

sector's ability to provide adequate "work force" housing because of rising land and construction costs. Again, partnerships between government and the private sector may be the best means to address this problem, and a Housing and Redevelopment Authority the best way to create and manage these partnerships. Regional Authorities composed of more than one unit of government area also permitted in the Commonwealth. A joint City/County Authority may well be an effective way to address regional housing problems.

It may be in the City's interest to seriously explore the feasibility and advantages of creating a Housing and Redevelopment Authority in the upcoming years to provide an effective tool for addressing these problems and responding to future opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The underlying theme of this Comprehensive Plan is the importance of the unique and special qualities of the City of Lexington and the surrounding area. Land use is one of the most visible means by which the City can ensure these qualities are maintained and enhanced. This chapter is a guide by which the City and the development community can base decisions consistent with achieving these ideals. To be effective, the recommendations must be implemented through a variety of means including policies, regulations, and administrative processes. The implementation of many of these recommendations will require changes in the City's land development regulations. In addition, future actions by the Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals and City Council are crucial to the implementation process. This chapter and this plan should provide guidance for future land use related public decisions.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: Encourage well conceived and planned land uses which recognize and amplify the City's unique small town character and which add to the City's tax base

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the City's residential neighborhoods as attractive, desirable places to live

OBJECTIVE: Ensure the establishment of appropriate transitional areas between commercial uses and lower density residential uses

OBJECTIVE: Identify vacant land with development possibilities and potential redevelopment areas and encourage development patterns which will be beneficial to the City both economically and aesthetically

OVERALL LAND USE GOAL: Encourage well conceived and planned land uses which recognize and amplify the City's unique small town character and which add to the City's tax base

OBJECTIVE: Review the present Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to ensure that its provisions and boundaries are consistent with the character of existing residential neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Ensure the establishment of appropriate transitional areas between commercial uses and lower density residential uses

OBJECTIVE: Identify vacant land with development possibilities, areas with potential for in-fill development and potential redevelopment areas and encourage development patterns which will be beneficial to the city both economically and aesthetically

OBJECTIVE: Designate the East Lexington bluffs area as a "Special Planning Area" to encourage innovative development proposals and encourage conditional rezoning, Planned Unit Development, or Conditional Use provisions of the zoning ordinance to encourage quality development

OBJECTIVE: Designate the C-3 zoned area in South Lexington as a Special Planning Area to facilitate new construction and redevelopment that reflects the unique character of Lexington and creates a more pedestrian-friendly commercial area

OBJECTIVE: Develop a concept plan and design manual that portrays the intended character of the site design, buildings, landscaping and public improvements for this area

OBJECTIVE: Facilitate improvement in this area by continuing the entrance corridor beautification program, including improved pedestrian access between the commercial area, nearby residential areas, the Brewbaker Field recreation area and Maury River Middle School

OBJECTIVE: Designate the C-2 zoned area along East Nelson Street as a Special Planning Area to facilitate new construction and redevelopment that reflects the unique character of Lexington and creates a more pedestrian-friendly commercial area

OBJECTIVE: Develop a concept plan and design manual which describes and illustrates the intended character of the site design, buildings, landscaping and public improvements for this area

OBJECTIVE: Enable private, taxable development on the city-owned property adjacent to the Rescue Squad building on Spotswood Drive

OBJECTIVE: Acquire additional interior parcels for the expansion of Brewbaker field if they become available to expand recreational facilities, as well as green space within the City

OBJECTIVE: Establish regulations which require that City approval be obtained for the demolition of any building within the City of Lexington

OBJECTIVE: Review and update the Planned Unit Development regulations to encourage more effective utilization of this important planning tool

OBJECTIVE: Maintain open communications with the administrations of both Institutions to ensure that their development plans are presented to the City and the community and that the City has an opportunity to participate in and comment on development decisions

OBJECTIVE: Work cooperatively with VMI to assure adequate on-post parking is provided so that new development does not negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Work cooperatively with VMI to encourage those who attend peak events held at VMI facilities to park in areas provided by the Institute rather than in the adjacent residential neighborhood

OBJECTIVE: Assure appropriate transition between post buildings and nearby neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Encourage VMI to donate the two VMI owned lots on Dorman Lane to the city's Threshold program for affordable housing

OBJECTIVE: Urge VMI to make protection and enhancement of Woods Creek an active part of the North Post development plan

OBJECTIVE: Strongly encourage Virginia Military Institute to remain within its present boundaries to preclude any further loss of the City's limited housing stock, as well as the loss of limited taxable land

OBJECTIVE: Strongly encourage Washington and Lee to program new construction within the present University boundaries to preclude any further loss of local business and industry, as well as the loss of limited taxable land

OBJECTIVE: Continue to work with W&L to explore ways to address their parking needs including the construction of additional on campus parking facilities and enhanced management strategies

OBJECTIVE: Collaborate with the county on how to devise road system connections that channel traffic onto existing or new collector roads and minimize increased traffic flow through Lexington's residential neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: Urge State Legislators to pass laws which enable regulations which require the timing of development as to be concurrent with road improvements necessary to handle both direct and cumulative impacts